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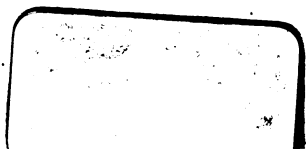
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JOAN OF ARC;

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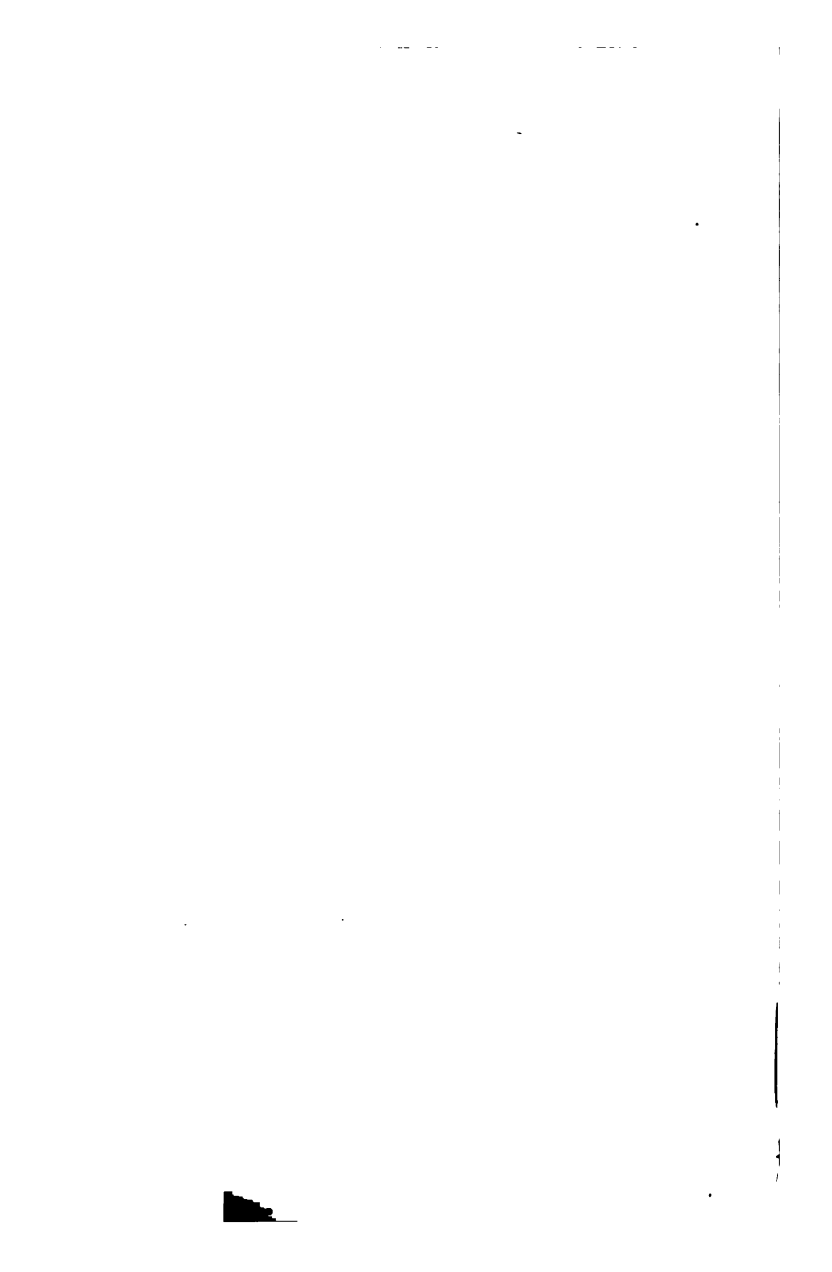
HISTORICAL TALE.

BY A YOUNG LADY.

"She steeled her woman's heart to fight,
Cared nought for pain or woe;
Her midnight dreams? To view the sight
Of Bedford's overthrow." . . .

LONDON:
SHEPHERD & SUTTON, FOSTER LANE, CHEAPSIDE.

1844.



INTRODUCTION.

CRITICS, forbear your censure! Kind public, be indulgent! I seek not to introduce "JOAN OF ARC" before you as a novel. I desire not to compare my unpretending penmanship with the many ably written works of the day.

To you, my dear sisters, and my young friends, I dedicate this "little Tale." I wish I could take a peep at you whilst you turn over the leaves; and, with unpardonable effrontery, I confess I should "laugh for joy" if I could see your eyes moistened with the

“tear of sympathy,” as you follow the thread of the story. I should feel, then, that I had struck the right chord, and that you enter at once into the *moral* of my tale. Agree, then, with me, that we often peruse too rapidly the striking events recorded in history, without bringing home those events to our *hearts*, and inculcating from them useful lessons for our future and ripening years.

I fancy I see you all smile, and say, “bring the history of Joan of Arc home to ourselves!” Have patience for a few moments, and I will *explain* what I mean.

We are not called upon to fight for our country, nor is it probable that we shall suffer death at the stake for its cause; but are we not daily, hourly called upon to exert our fortitude to meet, with Christian behaviour, “the every-day trials of life.”

Let us not, then, rest contented with repeating in our school-days, as a biographical

lesson, "Joan of Arc suffered at the stake by order of the regent Bedford."

No, let us pause, whilst we realize her whole life. Think of Joan, in her childhood's hours, guarded by a mother's watchful care, and follow her afterwards alone and unprotected! Realize her girlhood's sunny days, and follow her through the vicissitudes of war, exchanging her peaceful home for the battlefield! Think of the many trials she was exposed to in Charles's gay court! Surely the undaunted Joan possessed great moral courage, and I would fain believe that this great virtue seldom exists without some religion filling the heart.

Now, I believe, you will enter with me into the moral view of my work, namely, impressing on our minds the "*sustaining* power of religion on our *lives*." And if we are *truly* followers of that Holy One who set us himself so glorious an example, we shall abide

patiently his will, under every trial, uttering these words, "Thy will, not *ours*, be done, O Lord!"

If we are indeed followers of that Holy One, we shall, like the "father of the faithful," offer at the shrine of belief, "the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."

Should reverses of fortune, the loss of friends, or the persecution of enemies assail us, let us check the repining tear, ere another fall, remembering that with each trial our heavenly Father will send a comforting balm to cheer us in our pilgrimage through the "narrow path which leads to everlasting life." Let us always have our glorious reward in view; let us bear in mind that this transient world is *not* our dwelling-place; that we are sojourning towards that bright, pure land, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Alas! I wish I could assert that all the

characters in my little work are fictitious. I fear we shall all, my young companions, meet in the world many ungrateful Charles', many vindictive Bedford's, many, too many, smiling, promising ones like Agnes Sorel; — too many like her willing to grasp us by the hand of friendship, either because we are prosperous, or (what is worse) because we are new characters; like Agnes, these light friends will leave us in our wintry bower, to brave the storms of the rude hand of affliction. Let us then cultivate in our early days the acquaintance of those who, guided by the unerring hand of religion, (though they may reprove us at times, and that severely), will not forsake us for newer friends. Look not with the giddy admiration of youth upon bright but fading beauty as the standard of perfection. Remember that the purest pearl is oft times found in the roughest oyster. Finally, consider well Joan's fate—not as ordered by Bedford, but by

our Supreme Father above. She, certainly, was pious, but not sufficiently pure in her devotions: her earthly king was the first object of her thoughts. And how many of us make idols of the mammon of unrighteousness, and lose sight of that good and holy One who ought to fill our hearts? Must I *now* apologise for fiction? Certainly not, if it has wrought out the good work intended by the young authoress of these pages, who again repeats—Critics forbear your censure; this is not the work of a professed literary character, but the first effort of

A YOUNG LADY.

MAY 22, 1844.



JOAN OF ARC.

CHAPTER I.

THE moon had risen, and was shedding her mild rays on the verdant green and the thick summer hedges. A breeze, so gentle that it scarcely ruffled the foliage on which it played, tempered the heat which had been felt during the day. Oh! how beautiful is that twilight hour, when the busy world is still—when the wearied labourer rests from his work—when the feeble child of want finds a shelter, be it ever so homely! This is the hour to take a solitary ramble, and to commune in thought with our Maker. How can we then doubt his Omnipotent power, when earth, air, and elements are our only witnesses, all proceeding from his Divine hands? Ah! this is

the hour to take a calm survey of our past lives, to think of the emptiness of the world, of its hollow vanities. Can the glittering branches of a hundred chandeliers shine as does the moon's silvery rays?—what carpet half so soft as the beautiful turf we tread?—what so fragrant, so refreshing as the countless shrubs around? The evening hour approached: night was drawing her mantle over the beautiful scenery. The sheep were penned in the fold, and their watchful guardians were seeking the rest so beneficial to mortals. All were soon buried in deep sleep: peaceful and refreshing were the dreams hovering round the shepherdesses' pillows; but there was a light still glimmering through one small chamber window,—surely no one slumbers there? Ah! no: shall we take a peep into that little room? How clean, how neat is the snowy bed and homely furniture!—why, therefore, does the young girl, who ought to be courting repose, pace the room with quick steps and quicker beating heart? Does ambition, does the care of life, the folly of a dream, haunt her pillow, and snatch her repose? We shall soon discover the young

girl's secret, for she talks aloud, so agonizing appear the mental sufferings she endures:—

“ Ah, my poor country !” she exclaims, “ my heart bleeds for thy sufferings ; would that this feeble hand could strike, that this weak voice could command ! the sun should then rise on a conquering army, again should my beloved France be free ; our fields would re-echo the sounds of mirth, my king would be crowned with the honour due to his birth ; but, alas ! what am I ? A poor peasant girl. No, Joan, cast away idle thoughts, still the throbbings of thy heart, listen to the bleating of thy sheep, forget that dream, be happy.—Happy !” the young girl exclaimed, laughing bitterly.

At length the morning dawned ; the sun shone brightly upon the little village of Domremy, the peasantry repaired to their several vocations. Poor Joan drove her little flock to the field, she caressed a favourite lamb, she plucked the freshest grass, the animal bounded round her, fed out of her hand, but she could not smile. Her large eyes rested on the ground,—the lamb bleated :

“ Poor animal !” exclaimed Joan, bursting

into tears, "thou art happier than I am ;—still, why happier ? What is thy fate ? Thou must frisk and play till some seigneur requires thee for his table ; well, true, but one blow from the butcher's knife will end thy sufferings, whilst I—I must live—"

"And wouldst thou die ?" exclaimed a mild voice behind her.

Joan turned hastily round—"Oh, Monsieur le Curé, have you heard my conversation ?" she said blushing.

"I have heard thy last sentence, maiden," he replied.

Joan cast her eyes in confusion to the ground, and at last, throwing herself on her knees before the curate, she burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming in broken accents, "Oh ! Monsieur le Curé, I am so unhappy !"

The good curé raised the young girl from her kneeling posture, and gently seating her on a rising bank, he begged her to inform him of the cause of her uneasiness. Great indeed was the good man's astonishment, when, instead of some love-story, some trifling grief, Joan, in the most pathetic language, informed him that she was grieving because the English

were in possession of Rheims, and that consequently her king had not been crowned there, as all his predecessors had been.

"But he has been crowned at Poitiers," replied the astonished curé, kindly humouring her.

"True," said Joan; "but are not the English becoming each day more powerful?—are they not every day making new conquests? Is not King Henry more successful than our sovereign?—will not his great generals, Bedford and Salisbury, march into the very heart of our capital? Alas! Charles has many kind wishers, but no such generals."

"Joan!" exclaimed the curé, stedfastly looking at her to see if she was indeed Joan of Domremy, the peasant girl; "Joan! art thou mad? Where gatherest thou thy information?"

"I dream," firmly replied Joan.

"Ah! there I believe thee," replied the curate, laughing nervously, for he was, he knew not why, somehow awed by her grave solemn manner.

"Well now, Joan," he said, after a moment's pause, "I will leave thee; promise me this,

thou wilt retire early this evening, sleep soundly," (here he forced a laugh,) "and dream as much as thou wilt, only come to me after breakfast, and relate to me thy dream."

"Very willingly," replied Joan, her countenance beaming with a brighter smile than it had known for some time.

The good pastor bent his steps homeward, certainly astonished beyond description, and it required some great event to puzzle him.

The curé was an important person at Domremy, "passing rich, with sixty pounds a-year;" ever performing his duties to the best of his abilities, he was beloved and respected by all his congregation; he was indeed the shepherd to whom his flock looked for support, for help, for advice. There was not a hut or hovel which had not been cheered by his presence; he soothed the bed of death, his prayers encouraged the parting soul in its passage to eternity. To the helpless he gave relief; the sorrowing, comfort; to the believing he whispered words of hope and peace. To his divine duties, the good pastor united the office of judge. Gentlemen of the long robe would have starved at Domremy; for the

longest speeches, most ably delivered, though perhaps more enlightening, would have been far less persuasive than the good pastor's "yea or nay," who generally sent both the offender and offended party home more amicably disposed to each other than previous to the quarrel. No wonder the old man's eyes glistened, that his cheeks, though no longer glowing with the bloom of youth, shone with good humour and benevolence. What is there so beautiful in nature as the declining years of a well-spent life, when the stormy passions of youth are past, when the ambitious views of manhood have expired, when hope, faith, and resignation fill the soul, purifying and preparing it to meet that good and holy Being who made it in his own likeness. Great and exalted thought! how it should fill our hearts and minds with good and holy thoughts, and encourage us to walk in the narrow path which leads to eternal life! Transient, indeed, is all here below: why waste in unprofitable pleasures the fleeting hours of life?—why pay such homage to the shrine of fashion, when the end of all things is "vanity?" Alas! how many of us rise, day

after day, without considering the great work which is before us ! How many of us retire to rest still further from our heavenly resting-place ! Thanks, then, many thanks to the ministers of the Gospel, who, like the good curé of Domremy, "watch for the salvation of souls," and watch not in vain.

CHAPTER II.

How changed were Joan's thoughts when she retired to rest, on the important evening after meeting the curate ! Her mind no longer wandered from one subject to the other, till at length it rested on the one romantic idea which filled it. But that evening a ray of hope shed itself over her thoughts and lighted up every line of her youthful countenance. Joan's little brother had left his hat in his sister's room : seeing it, she cast back her flowing tresses, and placing it playfully on her head, surveyed herself in her little glass with equal pride and pleasure. Suddenly recollecting her promise of retiring early, Joan threw aside her momentary mirth, and knelt in prayer by her humble bed. Whatever was the purport of her devotions, they were both long and fervent. Rising

from her knees, the young enthusiast retired to rest, and was soon asleep and wandering in thought, far away from the peaceful hamlet of her childhood, exchanging her native and meandering streams for the field of battle, her innocent flock for an army of warriors. Unfortunate Joan ! Poor misguided girl !

Joan spoke the truth when she assured the good curé "she dreamed." How could it be otherwise, when her thoughts were continually flowing in the same channel ! Her knowledge of the proceedings of the court lost much of its marvellous mystery, when Joan subsequently informed the curé of her acquaintance with Gustave Ambroisy, a young soldier lately wounded in a skirmish with the English. Gustave returned to Domremy (his native village) with a mutilated limb and a disappointed heart.

The ardent youth, passionately fond of the career he had embraced, now found himself once more in his native dell, a miserable invalid ; and although the surgeons had declared that time and care would restore health to his body and strength to his limb, the young soldier sighed as each hour struck, and lamented

his absence from his brothers-in-arms. Sauntering about the country, partly in obedience to his medical adviser's orders, partly to dissipate the ennui which oppressed him, the young man became acquainted with Joan. At first he accosted her as he would any other country lass, with words of courtesy, but gradually becoming acquainted with the wonderful bent of her lofty mind, their conversations assumed a deeper tone; and whilst her flock fed on the flowery meadow, Joan listened to the animated tones of the young soldier's voice as he poured into her ready ears tales of war, and anecdotes of the battle-field. Strange to say, Joan shuddered not at the most trying parts: when she heard of a great man's death on the gory plain, her only exclamation being, "he died in glory, fighting for his king." Towards the Regent Bedford, she always expressed the greatest abhorrence, little thinking that she should one day be a captive at his will and mercy.

The grey dawn was hardly breaking, when, according to custom, Joan began the simple preparations for her toilette; that day, however, she determined to be particularly smart; for

although the young girl never felt the slightest degree of personal vanity, she had a particular reason, on the present occasion, for setting off her person to the greatest advantage. She was a very attentive observer of characters, and had long since noticed that even in her little village the greatest attention was given to those whose personal appearance inspired at once interest for their cause. "Surely," thought she, "if ever human vanity is pardonable, it will be on this occasion." Thus reasoning, poor Joan reviewed her little wardrobe, and whilst doing so, a shade of thought suddenly overspread her features. "Not this gaudy blue ribbon," she exclaimed, restoring it to its place: "no, mine is a deep, a mysterious call, and this gaudy show is ill in unison with my solemn design."

She replaced her treasures in their various places, and, simply attired in her usual serge dress, and snowy white kerchief, she led her flock as usual to the meadows. Joan had never before listened with such intense anxiety to the village clock; she sat down, rose again, and in inexpressible anxiety paced up and down, busy only with her own deep burning

thoughts. At last, the intenseness of her feelings amounted to perfect agony. She again sat down, and burying her face in her hands, Joan fell asleep.

She dreams

She hears the sound of music, and the clashing of arms. Presently she fancies herself in a large cathedral, the priests are clothed in their festive robes, the king smiles upon her, and the bishop, placing a crown on the king's head, the music becomes louder, bells ring merrily, and Joan at length started to the sound of a heavy cannonade.

"He is crowned! he is crowned!" she exclaimed, jumping up hastily.

"Is he?" cried Gustave Ambroisy, who had silently contemplated the sleeping Joan.

"Oh, he is crowned! he is crowned!" she still repeated.

"But it is past eight o'clock," replied Gustave, "and if kings do not neglect their meals, surely those who dream of them need not."

"I do not want any breakfast," answered Joan, peevishly, angry with Gustave for interrupting her delight.

"Nay, Joan," replied the young man, sooth

ingly, "I must remind you of your promise of breakfasting with us this morning, and it is now eight."

"Eight!" exclaimed Joan, her whole frame vibrating with pleasure, "then forgive me for being hasty, Gustave; I must go to the curé's. I will breakfast with you to-morrow."

The curé's name was too powerful to be disputed; Gustave merely remarked, that he trusted Joan would not fail to visit his mother and sisters in the morning, and the young girl bent her steps unobserved to the curé's residence. Joan was generally a great admirer of nature, but in the present excited state of her imagination, the most splendid Italian scenery would have been lost upon her. The curé's house was at some distance from the spot where she led her flock; the road was by the banks of the Meuse. It was a lovely May morning; flowers were opening their spring beauty to the day, the hedges were budding in clustering loveliness, the birds were chirping and hopping from spray to spray, a few small sailing boats were slowly floating down the river, scarce a ripple disturbed the current of its still waters, the sky was bright, yet subdued,

nature seemed at rest, and the whole scenery around, as well as the beautiful tint of the verdure was, as it were, the work of enchantment, it stole so gently on the senses, imparting a calmness to the mind more to be felt than expressed. It is indeed wonderful to observe the force of nature upon our hearts. How differently do we feel in the country to what we do in a crowded city! Some persons experience this sensation of harmony, of quiet and peace, with a mixture of pleasure and pain. Yes, I may place the words together,—pleasure and pain! I have felt it myself; a solitary ramblé has called forth ideas long pent up, has given rise to feelings unaccountable even to myself. Nay, I may say I have felt more religiously inclined on returning from such a ramble. And yet I would not entirely forsake the haunts of men. I like to mix in the world's busy throng, to watch those who, following business or recreation, still forget not the one great end of their lives, and remember with religious fear "that in the midst of life we are in death!" A few brief years, and this transient life is past. Some depart in their cradle bed, others are snatched away just as life is

budding forth, some in their spring, some in their wintry hours. Yes! it behoves us all to think seriously of our end, for we know not the day when we may be called. Of what avail to us is beauty or youth! Daily do we see the young and the gay cut off as "the flower which fadeth away:" how beautiful is it then to train up children in the way they should go, that whether called away in their youth, manhood, or old age, they should whisper at the last, "Thy will be done, O Lord!"


CHAPTER III.

JOAN was admitted with the utmost courtesy into the good curé's breakfast room: she observed that covers were placed for three persons. The curé appeared to read her thoughts.

"Take off your hood, Joan!" he said, "and sit down to breakfast: some warm coffee and rolls, will do you good after your morning's walk. I expect the Count de Dunois, who intends doing you the honour of hearing your dream. Sit down, Joan."

"I would rather stand," she replied, retiring in a modest manner a few paces from the breakfast table. A loud knock prevented the curé's reply. Whilst he ran to admit his noble guest Joan had leisure to recover her serenity, which was rather shaken when she heard of the Count Dunois' intention of being present at

the interview. "Yet why should I be afraid of Count Dunois," she thought, "when I would at this moment give all I value most on earth to speak with the king." So consoling herself, she looked around to reconnoitre the apartment into which she had been conducted. It was not very large, but as it was certainly the most spacious room she had ever seen, of course Joan contemplated it with admiration. The walls were covered with handsome pictures, principally on religious subjects, the furniture was ancient, and the curé's high-back chair was elaborately and curiously carved in oak. There were two large windows both opening on a lawn scrupulously neat. The garden was terminated at the river's side, and divided from it only by a bank of sufficient height to prevent the water making inroads on the neat garden. The view from the window was very pretty, the curé's humble church and the beautiful ruins of an ancient convent were the most conspicuous objects. Further in the distance, and also by the river side, was the chateau Dunois, a country seat belonging to the Dunois family. The count's only son was an active officer in the king's army, and perhaps none of his



many generals ever served Charles more effectually ; for, inheriting with his father's good qualities, his greatest weakness, "superstition," he afterwards performed great feats of valour under the command of the undaunted "Joan of Arc."

We must now return to Joan, who, notwithstanding her assumed boldness, was blushing deeply under the scrutinizing glance of the old count. The latter had heard from the curé Joan's strange fancy of saving her country, and his curiosity alone would not have caused him to rise so unusually early, but he actually entertained a sort of superstitious fear of her.

"I should like the young girl to sit down and eat something," said the count, probably anxious to see that she possessed at least the power of eating, and was so far mortal.

Whether Joan guessed what was passing in the count's mind, I know not : probably she wished to show her obedience to his wishes, for at an encouraging sign from the curé, she sat down, and with perfect ease and good humour, partook of the excellent cheer of the breakfast table.

"Well, Joan," began the curé, when the count appeared satisfied that thus far the

young girl was like all other mortals, "I have been telling his honour the Count Dunois of your devotion to your country."

"And of your dreams," continued the count.

"And of your dreams," said the curé, by way of encouraging Joan. "Have you still thought of the king, my child?"

"Thought of him?" replied she, tears filling her eyes. "Ah! Monsieur le Curé, I have thought of little else; and last night,—no, it was this morning——"

"Never mind when, but you dreamt, child," said the count, "go on, go on."

"I dreamt," continued Joan, in a calm tone of voice, speaking slowly and distinctly, "that I fought for my king and country, that my beloved sovereign was crowned at Rheims. Oh! there was joy and music there! such music! not like any thing I have ever heard."

"I dare say not," ejaculated the count, examining attentively Joan's face, radiant with animation and hope. "Oh! Count Dunois!" continued she, as, forgetting all her former fears, she looked imploringly in his face; "Oh! if I could but go to Paris and see the king!"

"Thou shalt go, Joan;" replied the count, striking the table vehemently. "I promise it, and more than that, I will escort thee to the court."

Poor Joan! had she heard aright, or was she indeed dreaming?—had she really attained the summit of all her wishes, of nightly visions and waking thoughts? The words "thou shalt go," still sounded in her ears, the room seemed turning round, Joan could no longer keep her eyes open, but sank in a death-like swoon at the old warrior's feet. The count kindly raised her, and the curé's exertions, joined to his, restored her once more to life. As recollection returned, her ideas became calmly fixed on the reality of her position; she knelt before the old count, and looking solemnly at him, said,—
"Count, you are not mocking me, I trust, for your promise I hold binding; say then those words again, 'Joan thou shalt see the king.'"

The count repeated the words twice, and further added, "Joan, if you wish to be a warrior, you must also be very discreet; I charge you therefore not to make your visit here the subject of idle conversation: remember, caution and activity are necessary above all things. All

shall be prepared by to-morrow evening. Can you come to Monsieur le Curé's at eight o'clock?"

"Certainly!" replied Joan.

"And can you be discreet?"

Joan paused.

"Count Dunois," she said, looking up in the most artless manner, "I cannot deceive you, oh! that would be a base return for all your kindness! But, count, I have a mother! one who loves me tenderly, has borne with my childish humours, has watched me in sickness, and been my friend, my guide, and my adviser. Speak for me, Monsieur le Curé: can I leave my mother without asking her blessing?"

"I believe Joan's mother to be a very discreet woman," said the curé, wisely determined not to offend his rich neighbour.

"So discreet," answered the count, "that her tears and lamentations would rouse the whole hamlet. No, no, I shall not trust to woman's discretion; the manner in which Joan goes to Paris must be a perfect secret, I have potent reasons for wishing it so, and it must now be decided or given up for ever, at least as far as I am concerned. The curé shall speak

to your mother, after your departure ; now, Joan, you must decide—will you fulfil your mission, or return to your flock ?”

“That were better, seigneur, than parting from my mother on my perilous journey, without seeking her blessing. Without it I feel my cause would not prosper. Thank you, seigneur, my choice is made : I will return to my flock, certain that God will raise me another friend ; if not, unfriended, unprotected, I will commence on foot my journey, strengthened by more than mortal aid, and supported by a mother’s parting prayer.”

Joan had struck the right chord, the count’s superstition returned in full force, and again he doubted whether he held conversation with an ordinary human being. “Well, Joan,” he said, after a long pause, “you shall confide in your mother and in her alone.”

Joan thanked the count, and the latter, wishing the curé good morning, took his departure ; he entered his equipage, and the young girl was left alone with the curé.

“Oh, Monsieur le Curé !” she said ; “how can I be grateful enough for your kindness?”

“I doubt if it is kindness,” replied the old

man ; "when I mentioned your strange conversation to the count, I little thought of this termination of your wishes. Perhaps I have acted wrong ; if so, I shall bitterly repent the part I have had in your scheme. Then, Joan, pause before it be too late, consider the magnitude of the undertaking, think how you will feel in the busy city, how you will shrink from the bold looks of the gay courtiers ; perhaps, too, my child, they will mock you and imprison you as an impostor. Joan, are you prepared for all this ?"

"For more than that, Monsieur le Curé, for victory or death. Oh, how willingly would I give my life for this cause ; and you will give me your blessing, Monsieur le Curé ?"

"That will I, young girl, and my fervent prayers shall attend you wherever you go. Take this book, Joan ; it is the sacred volume ; let it be your guide and consolation. Go now, Joan, we shall meet again."

"And that may be the last time," murmured Joan, as, respectfully bowing, she retraced her steps home.

Home ! the thought chilled Joan's heart ; she felt a secret conviction she should never see it

more ; that she would not rest in her own quiet churchyard, but die far away from the ties of kindred, and the loved spot, home ! How sweetly sounds that word ! The sea-tossed sailor, after his arduous day, sleeps soundly in his hammock and dreams of home ! delightful vision, his wife, his children greet him ! yes, he fancies he hears their voices, he wakes ! Alas ! 'tis a dream ; but the idea that soon that delightful dream will be realized, cheers and supports him through all his difficulties. We all cling to home ; when far from it the gayest scenes lose their brightness ; the present happiness has its alloy ; we sigh for the familiar faces, we wish to hear the well-known voices, to feel again the soft kiss of affection, the "welcome home !" The busiest scenes of life will not efface the memory of our childhood's home ; how indescribable is the feeling we experience when first separated from the bosom of our family ! Who has not often remembered the choking sensation, the gushing tears, the silent pressure of the hands, the conviction that we are linked heart to heart, and the promises of never-varying affection ? How delightful is it then to remember that if we all use our best

endeavours to do our duty, we shall again meet where troubles and adversities are over!—that assurance ought to carry us through life, and be our comfort in the hour of trial; it should cause us to dry our tears and part in resignation with the dearest friend. Perhaps this appears a hard lesson to practise: I thought so once, until I became acquainted with one who practises the above doctrine; strengthened by faith and supported by her constant prayers to the throne of grace, she has nobly met her severe trials; the loss of beloved friends have been her greatest afflictions. In that, as in all other things, she sees the hand of God; and I recall to mind, whilst thinking of her, those comforting words, “He whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

CHAPTER IV.

NEVER before had Joan thought her native village half so pretty as she did that morning, on her return from the curé's house; now she paused to look at the tranquil river flowing so calmly near her; now she looked at the village church, and thought how, ere another Sunday arrived, she should be far away, perhaps never again hear the good curé preach. Saddened by the thought, she dashed away a tear, and resolved to visit the edifice the next morning, there to offer up a fervent prayer for the success of her cause. It was too early to return home, Joan therefore sought the spot where she fed her flock; the harmless creatures were in the same place she had left them. "Little lamb," said Joan, caressing her pet one, who now bounded towards her, and endeavoured to ex-

prayer ; her devotions finished, she was leaving the edifice, when she met Gustave Ambroisy. Poor Joan would have given anything to avoid the meeting, after the promise she had given the count, but it was now unavoidable, and she submitted to circumstances, and consented to accompany young Ambroisy to his mother's cottage. Gustave's home was far superior to hers, for the old Ambroisys had not a large family to support ; Gustave was their only son : the Count Dunois too was very liberal to them in consideration of Gustave's having proved himself a brave soldier ; altogether they were very comfortable, and respected by all the villagers. Old Ambroisy was delighted to see his son conducting Joan, to partake of the morning meal, she being a great favourite of the venerable old peasant, he indulged himself in the French manner of saluting her on both cheeks. The old dame claimed the same privilege, and after Joan had undergone this double operation, she sat down to the smoking milk and hot bread prepared for breakfast, and for a few moments she wondered she could ever have preferred a life of anxiety and uncertainty to a peaceful country abode. Poor

Joan ! like the rest of the world, she knew not what was good for her, and are we not all like her ? Perhaps not in the literal sense of the word, but do not the poor envy the rich ? and do not the rich envy those who are higher in power than themselves ? Ah ! if we were contented with our different lot in life, this world would be a far happier dwelling-place, and resemble more that better home to which we are all aspiring. But we will return to Joan.

“Joan,” said old Ambroisy, kindly taking her hand ; “you do not look so cheerful as usual, your cheeks are paler, and your eyes do not sparkle as they generally do ; yet in mirth or sadness, Joan, you are the same to me, I shall always look upon you as a daughter,—would that you were so indeed !”

“Say you so, father,” quickly returned Gustave, approaching the blushing maiden, “then, Joan, speak the word, will you be that old man’s daughter ? Will you make me happy by being my wife ? The villagers would rejoice at our wedding, Joan, and we shall be so happy, dear girl,—speak, Joan.”

“I thank you, Gustave,” replied Joan in faltering accents, speaking through her tears.

"I thank you, but I have no wish to marry at present."

"Nonsense," exclaimed the old dame.

"Nonsense," echoed the good man, "this is maiden coyness, Joan. Do you prefer any other young man to the wounded soldier?—are you afraid of his profession?"

"Oh no, no," replied Joan, with unusual ardour, "but I repeat it, I have never thought of marrying."

"But when you do think of it, you will not forget my son," answered the kind-hearted old man, not the least displeased.

"Some time will elapse before I shall have inclination to think of it," said Joan, evading the direct answer; "but believe me, I love Gustave better than any one else, and as a proof of it, I am not only proud of his offer, but will give him a mark of my esteem by making him a present of Asore, my little lamb."

"Your pet lamb, Joan?"

"Yes, Gustave, my pet one; will you not accept it?"

"Oh yes, willingly," replied Gustave, evidently astonished at the gift.

"Well then, Joan," said the old father,

greatly pleased, "I see you are only a little coy, and such like, so it will all be right, God bless you, Joan, you are a good girl. Go, Gustave, and bring home the lamb; we will call it little Joan, and be very kind to it."

"Thank you," said the poor girl, the tears gushing into her eyes, and her heart beating violently.

"God bless you," said the old man.

"God bless you," faintly muttered Joan; she could say no more, but closing the cottage door, walked on before Gustave had reached his hat, and sobbed as if her heart would break. Oh she loved Gustave, but had always sacrificed every feeling to that only patriotic one which caused her misery and death. By a sudden and violent effort, she dried her eyes, but not before Gustave had noticed her dejection. With the most refined delicacy of feeling, however, the young man made no remark on the subject; silently they both pursued their walk until they reached the spot where Joan's flock grazed.

"There is the lamb, Gustave, take it, and I need not add, be kind to it." She could say no more.

"Farewell, Joan, till to-morrow," said Gustave, totally ignorant of the cause of her agitation.

"Farewell," repeated Joan, but she could not echo, "till to-morrow," her heart was full. She hastened away anxious to be spared further conversation.

As to poor Gustave, he was rather flattered than otherwise, attributing Joan's agitation as a favourable sign for his future success; he took the poor little lamb home, and from that day tended it with unceasing care. Joan had now to accomplish the difficult task of telling her mother of their approaching separation. The good woman was considerably affected, but fortunately for both parties the curé's name operated as a charm. "Surely whatever his honour sanctions cannot be wrong," she thought. Joan's mother was a good but very homely person, no woman in the whole hamlet knew so well how to manage a household, and to live comfortably on very scanty means, but, however extensive her knowledge of cooking, baking, farming, &c., might be, her knowledge of the world was far more restricted. Domremy was her world, there she was born, there she had spent her young days, there she had married,

and brought up her family, there too she hoped to die. Once or twice each year she made an excursion to the next town a few miles distant, and that was the extent of her "voyages terrestres." The peaceful tenure of her life, imparted itself to her mind and temper, she was always the same quiet, harmless creature. She rose on Sunday morning with a smiling countenance, and Saturday evening found her after her arduous weekly duties again all smiles, and all good humour preparing the Sunday clothes for her little ones. And yet she had had her troubles: her husband fell from a ladder whilst engaged pruning the trees, the produce of whose fruit, sold at the market village, procured them many of their comforts. The poor man was borne to his house, and although his life was saved, that most precious gift from heaven, "the mind," was gone for ever; his fall had been the cause of a severe contusion of the brain, and though the poor man was perfectly harmless in his wanderings, he was a source of melancholy interest to his lively partner. The good woman would indeed have been different from the rest of mankind had she not severely felt this unforeseen calamity,

but time restored her to comparative cheerfulness, gradually she again sung as she worked at her never-pausing spinnet, and at last she spoke of her husband as if she had always known him such as he then was. Each humble villager was kind to the poor man, who, unable to work, constantly wandered about the village ; and if by chance he lingered longer than usual, some good neighbour always brought him back, his salutation from his wife on those occasions being a playful " So, so, good man, you wanted to leave your bonny wife, did you ? "

Joan had not been spoilt by foolish indulgence, she had formed her own character, and matured that fatal romantic disposition unknown to her family. She was, however, acknowledged far superior to her brothers and sisters, from the notice taken of her by a young lady of rank, who had instructed her. Ever thirsting for knowledge, Mademoiselle Dupré had found her poring over a worn-out volume : she was so pleased with her answers, as well as her intelligent countenance, that she provided her with books, and herself instructed her young protégée ; but, alas ! this delightful

intercourse did not last long; Mademoiselle Dupré caught a fatal fever in visiting a poor peasant's family, who were suffering from the disorder, and a few days' suffering removed her from the bright and happy sphere in which she moved. Unfeigned was Joan's grief for the loss of her young benefactress, and bitter were the tears which fell on the leaves of the books given to her by that gentle hand, then mouldering into dust. Poor Joan, she had no longer a kind friend to explain to her the difficult passages, and steer her mind "into the haven of peace." Tossed about as a light bark on a troublous sea, her mind treasured all she read, but was not sufficiently trained to choose the good and resist the evil: naturally enthusiastic, she read deeds of valour, which exalted her spirits to the highest pitch of excitement, until she ended by living, as it were, in a little world of her own, fancying herself a heroine before she actually became one. Even her own family at length believed that "Joan was born to be somebody," "to achieve great deeds, to acquire renown." We must also bear in mind, that this was a superstitious age; great faith was placed in dreams, and certainly the character

of Joan's were of an extraordinary nature, founded, no doubt, on her own highly-flown imagination, appearing, of course, very strange, as all nocturnal ideas generally do. Joan's mother had imbibed superstitious ideas about her daughter; when, therefore, she heard of her intended departure, she was pained to lose her, but not astonished at her determination. Thus far Joan was fortunate, but there were many other circumstances to try her, her promise of secrecy extending only to except her mother, made it a difficult task for her to control her grief, and part from each beloved one, without allowing it to be seen that she was "mentally saying farewell." Oh, that was a trying moment! when the little ones retired to rest, how Joan longed to press them nearer and nearer to her heart,—that poor heart so full of grief and anguish; but no, she must not indulge in the "luxury of woe," she must not weep with those who would have weeped with her: a hearty "good night, God bless you," was all she could say. Her imbecile father next claimed her attention. Oh, well she remembered the days when she had been that unhappy parent's pride, when he had called her

his "sweet Joan," and given her "Benjamin's share of love." Now all were alike to him, and yet for the first time Joan thought it was best, as her father would be spared the anguish of a parting scene.

At last this sad day closed; Joan and her mother left the house, guided by the light of the moon: they repaired to the curé's. Both silently walked on, Joan longing for her mother to speak first; her mother wishing, yet not daring, to interfere with plans, which it appeared to her were directed by Heaven itself. On, on, they still went, until Joan, breaking the intolerable silence, exclaimed, "Mother, dear mother, you will give me your parting blessing! Oh, speak kindly to me, for my heart is sinking!" She paused, her mother drew her nearer to her, the moon shone brightly upon them, and showed them a rising hillock; Joan seated her mother on it, and kneeling before her said, "now, mother."

"God bless you, my child," said the poor woman, bursting into tears, "how could I oppose thy wish? Go, Joan, and wherever thou goest, my blessing and prayers will be for thee; I have never known thee to be unkind,

or to forget thy duty, nor wilt thou do it now, ay, Joan?"

"Oh no, no, mother, never!" said Joan.

"Then," replied the simple-hearted matron, "what more can I say? return to us as soon as thou canst,—ever welcome to thy humble home: now, we will go on."

Joan rose from her knees: if she felt she would have said much more, she knew it was a great piece of eloquence for her mother; she therefore calmed herself, and a smile of great sweetness played around her dimpled mouth, as she saluted the curé, who himself opened the door for her. Now all her weakness was over, and with one powerful effort she prepared to meet each coming event with calmness.

A few moments more, and the count's travelling carriage drove up to the door.

He was much paler than usual, and appeared more agitated than poor Joan.

"Are you ready?" he said, kindly approaching her: "is that your mother?"

"Yes, sir," curtseyed the matron, "and I hope your honour will be kind to my child."

"Of course, of course," said the count, "but" . . .

"Oh, your honour means everybody will not. Well, then, Joan, all thou canst do is, to return to thy home, and" . . .

"Now, dear mother, pray go home," said Joan, fearful of irritating the count; "farewell, mother."

"But Joan," said the good woman, "you must take care of yourself. Here are some cheeses, and bread, and nuts, and" I do not know what further she would have added, as she took a large basket from under her shawl, which Joan, in her agitation, had not perceived; but the count interrupted her, assuring her that he had no thought or intention of starving Joan, pointing, as he said so, to a huge hamper, safely placed behind the carriage. Satisfied on this momentous point, the good woman once more threw her arms round her bold and adventurous child; their sighs and tears mingled, and in a few moments Joan was seated in the carriage by the side of the count, rather a strange position for a young woman; but Joan had no time to think of that, her mind was totally absorbed in the

one great, the now coming event. The count permitted her to indulge her reveries without any interruption, half afraid to disturb those meditations he considered as inspirations from a higher power. The night was damp, and consequently chilly: he therefore insisted on Joan's wrapping herself in a black cloak, which he appeared to have brought for the purpose, and its ample folds concealing her full but slight figure, improved her appearance greatly, —the hood encircling her white cap was so becoming, seen by the light of the carriage lamps, that the count declared Joan to be a very pretty fortune-hunter.

"Joan," he said, by way of breaking the silence, "pray can you tell me my fortune; perhaps your dreams will help you?"

"No, seigneur, I only dream on one subject."

"Now, do not make me believe," persisted the count, "that you cannot tell me my fortune. Come, begin; shall I be fortunate or unfortunate? I certainly deserve something for bringing you thus far on your journey."

"Oh, certainly, seigneur," replied Joan, warming with gratitude, "and I am sure Heaven

will reward you for your pains, I think I now see" . . .

"Oh, Joan!" shrieked the count, "I hope you don't see anything. Where, oh! where?"

"I was only going to say," returned Joan, "that I fancy I see you blessed with a tranquil old age, descending into the tomb in" . . .

"Joan, Joan!" furiously exclaimed the count, "is this a reward for all I have done for you? Instead of wishing me long life, I go into the tomb, Joan! I am not even gouty, and on the safe side of sixty; look at my teeth, Joan, good and strong, my eyes do not fail me, and my hair is only very thin in one place just at the top of my head. Why, some men of forty are worse than that. No, Joan, I will never ask you to tell me my fortune again; and if you only pay the king such compliments, '*malheur à toi mon enfant.*'"

"I beg your honour's pardon," said Joan; but the count, who was not accustomed to make long speeches, and was, moreover, afraid of Joan's having some vision, drew himself in a corner of the carriage, and either was, or pretended to be, fast asleep, as Joan soon became aware of the circumstance by an in-

creasing snoring loud enough to have prevented her sleeping, had she been disposed to do so.

But sleep was yet far, very far from Joan's idea, as the carriage rolled rapidly along. The pang of parting with loved objects became intensely painful. Her heart lingered yet in her cottage home, faces seemed to hover round her, beloved faces, smiling a last, a bitter farewell: ay, even then Joan felt a secret conviction she should never see them more, never return to the home where in love and mirth, years now fled by, had been spent. Religion, however, comforted her aching breast far more effectually than the most sympathising language could have done. Poor Joan, how thankful she felt that the count's continued snoring prevented her hearing his voice, and left her calmly to allay the throbbings of her troubled heart. At length the day dawned, and she could not distinguish where she was, each familiar spot had vanished. Where was the elm tree, under whose branches she had so often taken shelter? where the meandering stream, whose waters had so often refreshed her parched lips after a toilsome day in the

fields? where the rising hillocks, the plains,
the valleys, where? . . .

Exhausted nature now claimed its needful
rest: poor Joan slept, and for once reposed
free from visions and dreams, with a languid
smile upon her pretty face.

CHAPTER IV.

WE will not pause with Joan on her long journey, but follow her now as she enters the great capital. Oh! how she gazed at the long streets, the multitude of persons, the noise and bustle; how she wondered if she should be herself able to find her way amongst the turnings and windings of that large city. How grand, too, appeared the sumptuous clothing, for this was an age when dress was much studied: Joan noticed with a deep sigh, the fanciful dresses of the ladies; "their garments were greatly trimmed with furs and velvets, confined at the waist with girdles of silver or gold; shoes of the richest materials, and necklaces trimly decked. The men wore short jackets, the sleeves, as well as outward garment, slashed, so as to show their wide white sleeves.

Their hair was so long, that it covered their eyes and face; and on their heads they had cloth bonnets of a quarter of an ell long.* Well might Joan sigh, for considering the troubled state of the country, this attention to dress denoted too strongly the weak minds of a people, who, in such a critical time, could devote so much attention to such trifling and unimportant concerns. Count Dunois was much pleased at Joan's remarks on that subject; and he began to take a deep interest in her conversation. He explained to her his reasons for the extreme caution with which he proceeded; in fact, Paris was almost in possession of the English; but the count's carriage attracted no attention, and in the dusk of the evening, he alighted at a quiet dwelling-house in the suburbs of the town. After partaking of a slight refreshment, he told Joan to remain perfectly quiet until his return; and without further explanation he left the house. Joan thought the hours very long, but the count had much business to transact, and she was forced to remain patiently until his return. How very long appears each

* See the History of France, by Mrs. Markham.

moment when we are waiting,—how anxiously do we count the minutes as they pass, and in the lapse between the beginning and the completion of a momentous event, how often do we wish to retrace our path, and pursue a different course ; and thus, in the vigour of life, do we look back with regret on the green valley of our youth, and, in more advanced years, upon our autumn hours of life ; and we bitterly deplore the mispent hours of both those stages of our existence. Pause then, young people, in the midst of your hilarity of spirits, in the glow of health and the tide of pleasure, pause : this is the time to invigorate your mind and cultivate it, so that the seeds sown in your young days, will, with the blessing of your heavenly Father, bring forth fruits, which, ripening gradually, will, in the meridian of your life, form your comfort and solace. Time will then come softly upon you ; years will bring lines on your once smooth brow ; your eyes will lose their first lustre ; but your mind, your heart, they will be as fresh as ever,—years will have only improved them. Thus is it with those talented and amiable persons, we, alas ! too

seldom meet in our passage through life, like a well-tended garden, no weeds grow to check the luxury of the scented plants ; years improve their growth, and ripen the sickly seedlings into maturity.

We have left poor Joan all this time tossed by a thousand contending feelings, of hope slightly mingled with fear, but a daring heart reposed in her bosom, and she repressed its quick palpitations by the ever-cheering gleam of sunshine, which shed its reviving hope over her mind. Poor Joan, she had embarked in her dangerous undertaking, and determined not to flinch ; already her bark had past the rubicon, she must press on, she must guide it through its dangers to the safe shore, must brave the ocean of strife which she feared awaited her ; content, if she once more could repose in peace after her undertaking was achieved, on her soft little pillow at Domremy.

We must not pry into Count Dunois secrets, but he returned with a clouded brow, informing Joan that the tide was so in favour of the English, that Charles, and his indolent luxurious court had left Paris, defended by La Hire, Saintrivelle, and a few other brave

generals, who were willing to risk their own lives for that of their pleasure-loving monarch, whose court, even in the midst of these troubles, maintained all its usual luxurious pleasures, although the king himself was so poor, that we are told he was unable to pay for the clothes he wore. The count concluded by telling Joan the king was at Poitiers, and that he was unwilling to run the risk of being thrown into prison by the regent, Bedford, and must, therefore, decline proceeding further in the task of escorting her ; "but," continued the count, avoiding Joan's agonized look of disappointment, "I do not wish to leave you without help, if you will consent to wear the clothing of a peasant boy, the English, even if they meet you, will be too generous to take advantage of so humble a person. Be as silly as you can, answer any questions as briefly as possible ; and here is money, conceal the purse about your person, go into the most humble conveyances, keep aloof from useless conversation, and if you still persevere in your undertaking, that is all I dare do for you, except giving you two letters, which you must not open until you are at Poitiers : the event you so much wish, will

not, you see, be impeded ; but, Joan, Joan, take care ! if it be to aggrandize thyself, turn, my child, before it be too late ! build not castles which a breath of air will disperse ; be not vain, but turn back, silly girl, again I say, before it be too late ! ”

“ Oh ! no, no : pray do not ask me, count,” replied Joan.

“ Well, all I can say is this,” replied the count, (drawing his breath and panting with exertion,) “ that I have never talked so much in my life, to no purpose too. My words have been halt, march, present, fire ; when I want my breakfast, I say ‘ breakfast ; ’ when I want my dinner, I say ‘ dinner,’ and so on : so now I say no more.”

“ Thank you, count,” answered Joan, “ I am ready to depart.”


“ Not so fast, Joan, you must have a night’s rest, and shall leave as early as you please.” She would still have resisted, but the count assured her, her clothing was not yet prepared, and she, therefore, reluctantly obeyed. There was no difficulty in finding the necessary disguise ; the count paying for everything was his great and only passport. The poor

old nobleman bitterly reproached himself for having given his aid to what he began to think was the mad freak of a silly girl ; but he was still rather awed by Joan's manner, and had, moreover, a great curiosity to see her in her new attire ; he was, therefore, nearly up as early as Joan, and the clothes having been sent contrary to the count's assertion the evening before, he left Joan to equip herself, first helping her to conceal two letters, the one directed to his son, Chevalier Dunois, the other to Agnes Sorel, the all-powerful and favourite beauty of the weak king's open admiration. Both the letters, as well as some money, they carefully concealed in the lining of the jacket, and the young girl soon appeared, looking as perfectly disguised as the count could have wished. Her hair, which was dark, luxuriant, and curled, naturally was much longer than would have been in character with a man's attire of the present day, but was, from its tendency to curl, much under the length of hair then frequently worn. She had parted it so as to conceal the rather delicate complexion, which, in spite of being burnt in the fields, and of rather a dark hue, had a

freshness almost fragile from its brightness. Her dark lustrous eyes peeped archly from the close rough cap which she had drawn as closely as possible over them; her figure was strong and well made, and the future "Maid of Orleans" then looked a fresh, handsome, young peasant boy, with a rather worn-out jacket, a handsome pair of eyes, dazzling teeth, and a look of daring, hope, and courage, which at once convinced the count she was not born to follow a flock. He was much affected by Joan's warm thanks, and watched her until her raven hair was hidden by her turning the corner; then for the last time the young girl turned round, and cast one long, one lingering look, in which the thankfulness of her heart was depicted, and hurried on to avoid giving vent to her feelings. The necessity of leaving the house before any one noticed her, had made the count hurry her so extremely that she could not send any message to her family, that dear circle she was never to see more. Nothing particular happened to Joan, she avoided the public ways, often asked her road, reposed under the pure canopy of heaven, fared frugally, paid a few pence, and

was assisted on her journey by mounting carts or any humble conveyances chance threw in her way. At length she heard she was near Poitiers, where her adventures really began. Wearied with fatigue and anxiety, she had seated herself on a rising hillock, buried in thoughtful and busy conjecture as to her manner of proceeding on her mission, when suddenly loud and piercing shrieks rent the air. Joan started up immediately, and following the sounds, repeated again and again, she darted into a wood which was at her right hand, and still following the sounds, flew with the speed of lightning, until she found herself near the scene of action, where, to her horror and distress, she beheld a wolf making his escape from the wood, carrying off a beautiful child, two years old, imprudently left to play on the threshold of a cottage.* A great concourse of persons were following, shouting to the height of their voices, but not daring to contend with the furious animal. The agonized mother was amongst the crowd, tearing her hair and calling aloud for her child, her poor little infant.

* Wolves were often seen even in the streets of Paris.—See "History of France," by Mrs. Markham.



Joan cautiously concealed herself behind a tree ; the animal, incensed with the noise of his pursuers, neared the spot with rapid strides, when, lucky chance ! a newly-fallen tree entangled the child's skirts, and the animal was forced to pause. Vainly endeavouring to proceed with his burden, he let it fall from his mouth ; a shout of pleasure rent the air ; nearer and nearer the crowd approached to rescue the infant, but before any one could effect this purpose, Joan darted from her ambush, and by one sudden spring threw herself on the animal, holding him with one hand, and with the other she threw her little cap so completely over his mouth as to prevent his moving ; then calling loudly on the bystanders, they dealt the wolf a few well-aimed blows, stunned him, and despatched him at their leisure. The child, almost expiring with fright, was restored to its mother. Poor Joan only heard the prayer of maternal gratitude, and sank exhausted to the ground. Some hours elapsed before she recovered her reason, and to her surprise she found herself on a large bed, splendidly hung with blue and silver drapery, costly furniture was in the apartment, carved oak chairs, and a marble table ; the toilette

table, as well as the mantle-shelf, were covered with rich blue velvet, ornamented with silver fringe ; the window curtains were of the same material, and the floor covered with an oriental carpet richly worked. Poor Joan rubbed her eyes, sat upright on the downy cushions, and endeavoured to recall her scattered senses, to remember where she was. Was it one of those bright visions which often cheered her soul ? Was it a dream too soon to be dispersed ? She endeavoured to rise, when, to add to her astonishment, she perceived what had before escaped her, that her little jacket so lately worn had been removed during her temporary illness, and that over her own humble female attire, (which she had worn under her male disguise,) she was wrapped in a loose white gown, richly worked in embroidery. Such a fairy-like change in her position was of course too much for her exhausted state, and Joan, without considering what she did, lay down as naturally upon the splendid couch, as if she were reposing in her humble room at home. When she again recovered, the beautiful curtains were closed as carefully as if a mother's watchful hand hovered round her pillow ; a

gentle murmur was heard in the room, and at last the curtains were drawn aside by a delicate hand, and Joan looked upon a creature of dazzling beauty, a female in the first blush of womanhood, with a brow so clear, so lofty, and pure, that it seemed as if the cares of the world had flown past her without even fanning her. Her cheek was fair, and the light from the azure curtains dimming her colour, gave her the appearance of a beautiful statue; the eyes of a deep blue, were shaded by a profusion of light ringlets, fastened by a silver clasp behind and falling low on the shoulders; her attire added still more to her grace, a pale primrose dress, with sylvan-looking net over it, looped up at the side with pearls, a long train of soft white satin, trimmed with rich ermine, completed her dress. Joan, even in her midnight slumbers, could not have conjured up so beautiful a creature. Her dark eyes were fixed on the fair vision so as to read if possible all she wished to know.

“Silence,” said the dazzling young beauty, smiling in a kind yet queenly manner; “not a word, eat and drink, questions after.”

With a thankful smile Joan received a cup

from her jewelled hand, an assistant now offered her some refreshments, and Joan, bewildered but undaunted, received both with courtesy, but not with servile thanks.

"Young girl," said the beautiful creature, contemplating Joan's face with some marks of admiration, "there is much I like in you, and although you were found disguising your sex under a peasant's garb, your noble action proved that no base design lurked in your heart. Yet you were the subject of idle conjecture, when I, hearing in my drive of your late achievement, bore you from the cottage to which the mother of the child had conveyed you. Now I have satisfied you; pray what is your name?"

"Joan."

"Well, Joan, if you can give me a satisfactory account of yourself, I will employ you about me; his majesty, too, wishes to hear more of you."

"His majesty!" said Joan; "where am I?"

"Where you little expected ever to be, I have no doubt," was the proud reply; "in the castle where King Charles of France is at present, and you are now speaking to Agnes Sorel."

The last sentence was less proudly uttered, as if Agnes felt that her name, all-powerful and so much flattered by the time-serving courtiers, had reached the innocent and humble persons in the land, as coupled with one who took the queen's affection from her gay husband. Yes, the beautiful Agnes shrunk from the gaze of the astonished girl, not knowing how to interpret the look of unfeigned astonishment which lighted up Joan's countenance. She ordered her attendant to withdraw, and Joan seizing the beautiful hand which was resting on the coverlet, covered it with kisses; then beseeching the Almighty to pour his richest blessings on her cause, she sprang from the bed, and, with the alacrity which distinguished her movements, (and served, perhaps, more than anything to inspire the people with awe for her,) she took the little jacket, which was on the table before her, and tearing the lining asunder, presented the astonished Agnes Sorel with her much treasured note of introduction.

"This is indeed extraordinary," said Agnes, recognizing the Count Dunois' writing immediately. "Well, Joan," she said, after perusing the note, "never again will I believe in chance,

no, surely we are all guided by a superior hand ; oh, yes ! surely this meeting was before ordered and planned by higher control than our own."

"Oh, yes, lady ! never trust to chance ; we are all the creatures of one superior Being, and we act not by our own will ; trifling events may sometimes appear our own planning, but the first and great principle is not ours."

"Then," replied the beautiful Agnes, a burning blush mantling her cheeks, "perhaps I am not so much erring as I often accuse myself of doing. The king is gay, and makes a merit of my poor face, and had I not been thrown in his path, he might have selected for his favourite one who would have used her power over him, to tyrannise over the great and oppress the poor ; ay, perhaps, I am not so blameable : what say you, Joan ?"

"Oh, do not ask me, lady ; we are so different in birth and rank ; yet you appear so kind ; must I speak ?"

"Yes, Joan."

"Well, lady, you have sinned, but you have punished yourself ; would it not be a far happier thing for you to be a poor man's wife, than the king's favourite ?"

"But, Joan, this is such simple philosophy that it is quite common-place," replied the petted beauty, who, although she had herself pressed the subject, could not bear to hear the whole truth; "what I mean is this, considering my present condition, my influence over the king, my unlimited power at court, if, I say, I use my power moderately, injure no one, preserve my love faithful to my king and master, am I not sometimes to have the pleasure of thinking I am doing well?"

"Certainly in those respects," replied Joan, whose love of veracity could not allow her to flatter the beautiful but erring creature before her.

"Well, now, Joan, I wish to know if you are serious in your wish to speak to the king? Is it possible that you really consider yourself called upon to rescue this unhappy land?"

"I am quite serious," replied Joan.

"Well then, remain here for half an hour, it may be even longer," said Agnes; "I will endeavour to maintain your cause; and I will also deliver your note to the Chevalier Dunois, who is high in the king's estimation; he will aid me no doubt:" and the spoiled beauty

tripped away, proud to show her power over the king, ay, even before the young peasant girl.

Agnes Sorel had, fortunately for Joan, a most romantic turn of mind ; like her old friend the count, she was superstitious, but her superstition was of a brighter nature ; whilst the count mingled fear with his belief, and awe for anything he considered tainted with superstition, she on the contrary placed infinite belief on the favourable result of any plan which was founded on romance ; she believed that the safety of France was so precarious, that this young maiden was sent an especial messenger from above to inspire the English with dread and force them to leave her unfortunate country. The baby King of England had been crowned King of France, and the Regent Bedford, aided by the brave Earl of Salisbury, had marched a large army towards Orleans, and had that very morning won so decisive a victory over the French in a skirmish with them, which was called the "Battle of Herrings,"* that the inhabitants of Orleans were little in-

* The English had sent their countrymen a large supply of herrings during Lent. The French sallied forth to attack the escort, but were driven back.

clined to brave a siege, and the heads of the army had already talked of giving themselves up to the Duke of Burgundy. Charles was moody and dissipated, more from indolence than real gaiety. Agnes felt that poverty would add to the king's ill-humour, and yet every retrenchment must be made to supply the besieged people. The next day the court and all the armed men who could be collected, were to march to the rescue of the threatened town, which was the last of any consequence the unhappy monarch retained. No time had Agnes therefore to lose, so she immediately sought the king.

CHAPTER V.

THE king's apartments were situated at the west-end of the building, which was a castle of great antiquity, belonging in succession to the lords of Poitiers, and now placed at the king's command. The household were busily engaged for his majesty's departure the next morning; Agnes, therefore, trod with noiseless step the long corridors and many turnings. Her hand was already on the handle of the door leading to the room in which she expected to find the king, when she heard some one approaching, it was young Orville Dunois; Agnes saluted him with more courtesy than she generally showed to the frivolous chevaliers who fluttered round Charles, encouraging him by their example, to a life of dissipation and carelessness.

Young Dunois, so called amongst his brother-officers, not so much for his youth,

(for he was at least thirty-two or three,) but for his hilarity of spirits and youthful appearance, was very superior to the rest of the courtiers. Too proud to flatter Agnes Sorel, whilst he payed all possible respect to his queen as his sole and proper mistress, he pitied more than blamed poor Agnes; he neither joined his voice with her many admirers, nor did he agree with those who looked upon her as the belle of a season, a being to flatter and to be flattered by, to laugh at or despise, as circumstances dictated. No, Orville Dunois looked upon her with an impartial eye, admired her beauty, but felt all its assumed pride more than its often softer expression. He regarded her as one having a lofty turn of mind, and pitied her as one deserved to be, who wasted precious talents in frivolous endeavours to please and be admired by her fascinating king. Poor Agnes had not the sense to perceive Orville's feelings towards her; and whilst she admired his raven hair, his dark expressive eyes, lofty brow, and fine gentlemanly figure, she pitied him, because she fancied from his subdued manner towards her, that he was captured by her acknowledged

beauty, and willing, like many others had he dared it, to make a confession of his admiration. Great, indeed, did Agnes think the sacrifice she was making when she spoke coldly and looked icicles at him, for if there was one person who could have diverted her undivided love for her royal master, it was Orville Dunois. But Agnes had quite presence of mind to know, how upon the slightest of threads hung her butterfly existence; she knew that whilst basking in the sunshine of the king's pleasure, she could at any moment be crushed at his will; she knew that the tide once turned against her, pretended friends would vanish, and leave her to her fate. Nurtured now with all the attention shown to a delicate flower, she knew that at the word which changed her prosperity, she should be left to wither in the gale, until her freshness gone, she should bow her head to her fate and die. Agnes had, therefore, carefully studied her part; she smiled upon the king, and beguiled him with her sweet powers of amusing, as well as her enchanting beauty; but if she could smile she could frown too, the king, therefore, always thought her love worth preserving, because he felt he could at a moment

lose it, and Agnes flattered her preference for him, by the marked coldness with which she treated the courtiers, so carefully put on, that at last it grew into her positive nature, and became her real character. This coldness only heightened her beauty, and that fair face which if always smiling would at last have fatigued the beholder with its doll-like appearance, and its continual sameness, was positively majestic from the reserved and lofty caste it assumed; whilst the courtiers admired her they were kept from avowing it, chilled at one glance from her large eye, and the disdainful curl of her chiselled lips. When any of the chevaliers braver than the rest, braved her coldness, then she called forth such a battery of sarcastic wit that she never failed to gain a complete victory over her tormentor, who was glad to retire in the long retinue of those who worshipped her in the distance, and Agnes was acknowledged in one sense of the word as irreproachable in her character.

Agnes paused on the threshold of the king's door, and begging Orville to accompany her to the terrace, she gave him his father's note. Orville was greatly astonished with its contents,

which recommended Joan to his protection if any ill usage were offered to her, giving him the name and exact spot where her parents resided, and finishing by expressing a firm belief that she was inspired from above. At first a smile played on his proud lips,—a smile of deep incredulity, but it gradually subsided into a feeling of compassion, mingled with admiration, when Agnes in flowering language described her late brave encounter with the wolf. Orville paused for a few minutes before he decided what course he took; at length he began:—

“Lady, you know the king’s love of romance is great, yet all-absorbing as is this passion in him, he has at length determined to think of loftier considerations, to shake off the shackles of pleasure, and live as becomes a king, and warrior; is it right, lady, to throw temptation in his way?”

“Do you really then think the young maiden has dared to make her long journey merely to look at the king, or for him to look at her? no, no,” she added, drawing up her graceful neck, “but even if she had she should see the king,—now what have you to say, Dunois?”

"That she had better return from whence she came, and tell her foolish dreams to her friends at Domremy, and such silly folks like my poor father, who, for want of better employment, listen to her."*

"Then I am amongst the silly list; I thank you for the compliment, seigneur," said Agnes, with a mock bend of her haughty head; "but I have a plan in my head, so must leave you for the present. We shall meet again this evening, and perhaps I will introduce my protégée to your notice, giving her full permission to be generalissimo, or rather generalissima of the whole army of chevaliers who make their sortie into Orleans, if my poor consent be of any avail."

Another smile curled round the chevalier's lips as he listened to the proud beauty, and both parted displeased, they scarcely knew why, with each other.

Agnes repaired to her robing room, and calling one of her women to her, proceeded to look at her rich dresses, until last of all the one she was seeking appeared in view. It was an Indian muslin of great fineness and dazzling

* Dunois afterwards attached himself to Joan's party.

whiteness. — “Now,” she said, turning to her astonished handmaidens, “make haste with that dress into my room.”

“I thought, lady, you ordered your blue gauze for this evening.”

“No matter, I require that also ; but collect your working materials, and come follow me.”

Meanwhile Agnes sought Joan. “Joan,” she cried, laying aside her assumed coldness, and beaming with smiles of graciousness, “I have changed my mind about delaying to present you, and must attire you in white ; in fact, trim you exactly as I please, then will I introduce you to the king,—do you consent ?”

“Yes, willingly,” replied Joan, with the greatest simplicity, “twice have I dreamt I should appear before the king with an olive branch in my hand, clothed in pure white, with a crown of laurel on my head.”

“Both shalt thou have,” said Agnes, pleased beyond measure with her protégée. Joan was quite as tall as the fair Agnes, and though not so slight, the dress, from its peculiar construction being made after an oriental fashion, with folds which were crossed at the pleasure of the wearer, it fitted Joan perfectly. Agnes fastened

it herself, and helped to arrange its folds, which hung gracefully round Joan's pretty figure. Next Agnes placed a white scarf embroidered with silver across her shoulders, and tied it round her waist, as the Scotch do their plaids, forming a deep girdle, at the end of which descended costly tassels of silver : the crown of laurel leaves was soon procured, and set off to great advantage Joan's dark hair, whilst her eyes flashed in unspeakable radiance under the raven curls which hung round her face and neck. Agnes was too beautiful to fear a rival, and although she admired Joan, she knew Charles would be more awed than pleased with her beauty ; it was therefore with pleasure that she contemplated her when her labours were achieved. " There now, Joan," she said, " were you ever so well dressed before ?"

" No, lady," replied the young girl, " and I hope I shall soon exchange this fairy gown for armour, this laurel wreath for a steel helmet ; thank you, dear lady, for all your kindness, may God reward you accordingly. I am ready now to follow you."


" Stop a minute," said Agnes, smiling at her impatience, " have you no fear of appearing

before his majesty and the court ? shall I tell you what to say ? shall I teach you how to bow ?”

“ No,” replied Joan, proudly ; “ the courtiers will bow to me, and what I shall say will be dictated by one superior to me,—superior to your great king : come, fair lady, be not angry, you shall judge shortly whether my words prove true.”

Agnes stayed one moment to arrange a stray ringlet, to cast one more anxious look on her protégée, and then taking Joan’s hand, she led her forth to the large withdrawing room where the king spent his evenings. Corridor after corridor they passed in silence, Agnes feeling more courage from Joan’s manner than in any boasting language she might have uttered.

The king was surrounded by the flower of the young nobility ; the room was lighted up so much that the glittering epaulettes and the handsome sword-hilts of the chevaliers shone as a thousand diamonds. The king wore a deep blue velvet mantle trimmed with costly ermine, clasped on one shoulder with a valuable diamond ; round his neck he had a thick gold chain, from which was suspended a crucifix, composed of precious stones. His waistcoat



which the mantle only partially concealed, was of crimson satin worked in gold ; his long hair fell in loose curls ; on his face shone a smile which no troubles could ever efface ; he was engaged in a game of chance with his eldest son, Louis. His wife, Mary of Anjou, with her infant family, were in a safe retreat, afterwards called the "Castle of Beauty," and presented by the king to his favourite, Agnes Sorel. Although the queen was not with the court, female beauty was not wanting, there the wives of several of Charles's able generals assembled in the evening, and a brighter and happier little court perhaps never met together, so jocose and light, notwithstanding the state of the country. The chevaliers were all handsomely dressed, their long shoes were ornamented at the points with precious stones ; and their glittering swords and long hair were conspicuous. As Agnes opened the door softly, Joan had time to look round before she was observed ; it must be remembered that the courtiers were attired like the king, some had scarlet cloaks, others blue like his majesty ; but Joan advancing to Charles, bowed low to the ground, exclaiming in thrilling accents, "Charles, my master, my king !"

All eyes were directed to the white-clad maiden, and the king, supposing it to be some new trick of his light-hearted mistress, advanced towards Joan, but she repulsed him by a graceful gesture of the hand.

"Who is this maiden?" said the king, turning to Agnes.

"No matter who I am," replied Joan steadily: "I am a humble tool in the hand of a Great Master, sent to speak of peace, to deliver France, to conquer the English, to save a nation's blood, to bid the weary warrior repose from his campaigns, to strike, to conquer, or, oh king! to die!"

"How knowest thou that thou art speaking to the king?" cried Arthur of Bretagne, Count of Richemont, wishing to puzzle Joan.

"Ah! indeed!" exclaimed a gentleman of Picardy, Monsieur le Général Perfleur, a man of low stature and mean appearance; "how sayest thou?—I am the king."

"Thou!" she exclaimed, looking at him with disdain, and laughing so scornfully that the courtiers joined in her momentary mirth. "Thou!" again repeated Joan, and the discomfited general retired with that one word,

"thou!" ringing in his ears, which he treasured up to triumph over poor Joan at her untimely end.

Whilst this dispute was going on, Agnes was informing the astonished king of all she knew concerning Joan, and the king gazing steadfastly at her, broke up the court, and ordered the latter to remain alone with him.

Joan now summoned to her aid all the power of her ready elocution; she exaggerated her dreams, her enthusiasm rose to its height, inspired her voice, flushed her eyes with almost supernatural power, tinged her cheek with the richest crimson; and, finally, inspired by hope, courage, and superstition, she left the royal presence after obtaining the king's promise of sending her the next morning at the head of an escort to Orleans.

Before retiring, Joan presented the king with the olive-branch she held in her hand; "This," she said, "I will redeem when I have taken Orleans; and that," she continued, detaching the laurel crown from her head, "that crown, the emblem of never-dying conquests, will your majesty keep till I see your august head crowned at Rheims, with the pomp belong-

ing to your rank, as your ancestors have been before you."

• "What !" exclaimed the king, catching at this novel and only hope, "dost thou promise all this, maiden?—perform one half of it—save Orleans—and gold, estates, all, all I can command, are at your feet for ever."

"Kings forget those who serve them," replied Joan, smiling; "I ask for none of these,—give me only a set of armour."

"Ay, right gladly shalt thou have these."

"And a horse?"

"Yes, the best palfrey thou choosest to take."

"Then now will I leave your majesty, and on my knees thank that great One, who brings such wondrous things to pass; but for a little lamb, your majesty, I should not have known the friend who helped me with money; but for the wolf, I should not have seen the Lady Sorel; and but for me, your majesty, the maid of Domremy, you would not so soon, perhaps, have reason to say, 'Orleans is saved!'" Kissing the king's extended hand, Joan left the apartment, and at the end of the corridor she met her friend, Agnes.

“Why, Joan,” she said, “you have raised a perfect storm; none of the courtiers will enlist with a woman-general; the Duke of Bretagne declares you are insane, and the Count Richemont says you ought to be imprisoned for your nonsense.”

“Ah!” said Joan, “these opinions affect me not: what, if I were not mercifully governed and protected, do you think, lady, I should have had courage to leave my native village?—no: my lot is cast. I shall perhaps die, perhaps wither in the flower of my years, but not,—believe me, lady, I am inspired to say it,—not before my words be fulfilled, not till I have saved Orleans, not till my king is crowned; then, oh! lady, come death on its swiftest wing, come it in its most terrible form,—either in tortures or on the battle-field,—I will still bless the hand which brings me to my end.”

“I believe thee, Joan,” said Agnes, tears filling her eyes; “I believe that thou art heroic, and canst suffer. I have fluttered only as a gay butterfly round the king, yet do I believe that I could die for him; but I should wish to die differently to the manner in which

you will. Joan, you will be slain directly;— what should you know about a battle-field?— from whence comes your knowledge?”

“From here!” answered Joan, clasping her lofty forehead; “and from here my courage,” she continued, pointing to her heart; “and from there my hope!” and she pointed above.

“Oh! I believe you,” said Agnes, much moved; “and, Joan, think of me sometimes when we have parted,” and she sighed.

“Are you not happy, dear lady? Yet you have wealth, beauty, and the king’s affections; and, besides, you look light-hearted.”

“And did not your sheep look happy, the very hour before the knife terminated their existence? and does not the knife of envy and ill-nature often pierce my poor heart, Joan? Listen to me: I, too, am turning prophetic; perchance thou wilt return victorious, thy beauty freshened by action, thy name renowned through the land; then will the great and rich smile on thee; they will court thy power and extol thy beauty; they will twine round thy heart, and, oh! Joan, when thou givest it to them, they will take it piece to piece as a dial, and not mend it again; but


leave thee, if perchance thy fortunes change, broken-hearted and forsaken, beware thou of flattery."

"Ah! lady," said Joan, looking at the fair creature's marble cheek, "would thou hadst practised this lesson before the knowledge of it had robbed thy young cheek of its summer's bloom. Thou wert not intended to be a king's favourite, but wert born to exercise thy powerful mind in making a family circle happy."

Poor Agnes! she thought of young Dunois, she leant against the wall and wept. . . .

Once more Joan rested on the soft couch on which her kind friend had first placed her, and as the young heroine received her gleams of imaginary hope whilst dreaming, we may be excused for once more hovering round her pillow. Long and refreshing were her slumbers that night; she appeared as it were, to take her first lesson in arms. Military sounds became familiar to her; the room was to her as a camp filled with armed men; she thought she felt the weight of her armour, but it was a welcome burden; and at length she lulled herself to sleep, free from these dreams, to the imaginary sound of martial music.

On waking the next morning, Joan experienced a new sensation ; fear seemed from this moment banished from her mind ; the most fearless courage filled her soul, and her voice was so loud in her warmly expressed thanks to the Almighty, that the maids about the castle ever afterwards declared she held communion that morning with invisible spirits. The king rose early and sent for Joan ; he received her with all possible respect, and presented her with a suit of armour of brightest steel, beautifully inlaid with gold ; he next led her to the window, where she had the satisfaction to see a splendid white horse, impatiently submitting to the operations of two grooms, who were arranging the saddle for its young rider. Joan's heart was so full, that she could not speak ; suddenly, however, she recovered her composure, placed piece after piece of the armour together with surprising alacrity, first wearing a tight riding habit ; she next clothed herself, with very little assistance of the king's, in complete armour ; the king, with his own hands, placed on her arms the heavy gauntlets, and presented her, lastly, with her hat, made as lightly as possible, and orna-



mented with a long, graceful, white plume, which waved gracefully round her pretty face: — “This vizor is very light,” he said in conclusion, “can you draw it down, Joan?”

“Oh yes, I thank your majesty!” she replied; “but shall not care to save my poor face, if I can but serve your majesty, it is all I wish for.”

“Now, Joan,” said the king, “it is our will that thou shouldst speak to the nobles who are indignant with me: see if thou canst disarm them; if not, take the escort without any of my nobles.”

“They are but tools like myself,” replied the undaunted girl; “but I fear not to speak with them: your majesty shall see them ready to follow me.”

“Then come this way,” said the king, and opening a folding door, he took Joan by the hand, and exclaimed loudly, “Nobles and friends, behold your general!”

The nobles were partaking of their morning meal, but they all arose, and there was such a murmur of applause and admiration through the vast apartment, that Joan turned pale with astonishment. Ah, she knew not the power of

her grace and youth : those who had laughed at her the previous evening, and had beheld her a slight-looking girl, clothed in white, actually shouted forth their admiration at the ease with which she moved, encumbered as she was with her heavy armour. Joan took off her plumed hat, and making a graceful motion with her hand, a silence profound, and striking, succeeded this first burst of admiration. She then began in a clear flowing tone of voice :—

“ Nobles, I thank you for your reception, and will claim your attention for a few moments, whilst I make known my wishes and my king’s to you. Forget my birth, call it low if you like, at least it is honest : think no longer of me as the peasant girl of Domremy, but as a messenger sent from Heaven to deliver our unhappy country, to free it from the shackles of the English, to cope with their bravery, and oh, nobles, to conquer them ! to say to the great Salisbury, withdraw thy forces ! and to the Regent, return, Bedford, to thy native land, amuse thy baby king, and leave France to liberty ; so that the peasants and nobles, as well as all ranks of men, now torn from their firesides, from the bosom of their wives and chil-

dren, shall once more return, and exchange the gory battle-field for the domestic hearth ! Oh, happy time ! oh, never-to-be-forgotten day ! when our king, returning to his long-lost capital, shall enter it amidst a nation's loud blessing, to the sound of freedom and victory ! Help me, my countrymen, to deliver Orleans ! my weak arm, strengthened by more than mortal aid, shall boldly wield the battle-shield ! my voice shall be heard in the conflict ! my steps shall be foremost in the fight ! I know," she continued, in thrilling accents, "that we shall be victorious ! I feel that the God who strengthened David's arm, will likewise nerve mine with a force invincible ! but if not, oh, nobles ! if Joan proves herself unworthy of her trust, if she shrink from danger, if she turn away from the enemy's fire, even at its most deadly height,—then, if she survive, oh, strike off her head, call her an impostor, strike without mercy : welcome the blow which shall send me out of this world, in which I wish only to live for this glorious enterprise ! When I return to thee, (here she looked at the king,) and, claiming my laurel crown, shall ask thee, 'art thou content, my king ?' thou wilt, perchance, remember the peasant


girl's mother, and by thy bounty enable her to pass her life in cheerful independence !”

“Joan,” answered the king, “on my word, as king and gentleman, when thou claimest thy crown, I will ennoble thee and thy family ! if I do not fulfil all my promises, may I again be subject to the same misfortunes from which thou art, I firmly believe, sent to deliver me ! Now, nobles, who amongst you follow in our maiden's train ? Let all who wish it hold up their swords.”

And at the instant, more than a hundred bright lances shone in the room, whilst the few who refused to give the token, left, to avoid observation.

“No time is to be lost !” cried Joan :
“assemble the men.”

The order was obeyed ; a gallant troop marched in military procession into the courtyard, spread over the castle ramparts, all eagerly stretching forward to catch a glimpse of the courageous young girl, towards whom they looked with reverence, mingled with fearful superstition. And now the martial music resounded far and near, echoing through the castle moats, and shaking each turret wall. Agnes



Sorrel heard it, and mounting on the highest part of the castle, waved a last adieu to her young protégée, who, accompanied by the flower of the French nobility, riding gracefully in the midst of them, as if she had been all her life accustomed to armed men, now left the castle, amidst the clashing of arms, the sounding of trumpets, the beating of drums; and the now trusting king, catching the last glimpse from a rising moat, beheld the departure of his gallant men, with their strange young general, and prepared to follow them with his body-guard, and those who would not be under Joan's command.

Agnes Sorrel remained for some time at the top of the tower, contemplating the beautiful scenery; and as the music died away in the distance, her thoughts were fixed on that young and daring girl. From her they wandered to young Dunois, who had consented to follow Joan: perhaps she should never again see either of them; and there was something truly affecting, to think that both had left her that morning with cheeks glowing with the brightest hue of health, and that before another morning's sun, they might be

lifeless corpses on the bloody field. Could she even contemplate such a death? could she have clothed her fair form in heavy armour, and have presented her fair face as a mark to the enemy? Oh, the picture was too dreadful to contemplate! So Agnes, who had not the courage to think of what Joan dared to encounter, slowly descended from the turret, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with the officers' ladies. But they too were busy with their own thoughts, each one according to her natural disposition, either picturing to herself her husband bleeding and dying, or returning in victory with fresh laurels just plucked.

What is there more affecting in life than to see an army preparing to go to the battle-field? each heart has been rung by parting with a mother, father, wife, or some tender ties of life, and yet the desponding heart is wonderfully supported, each one fancies he shall return: perhaps he may, he has before been in action, unwounded, unscarred; but, alas! how can the buoyant spirits look beyond that one fortunate time?—and, indeed, it is a solemn thing to reflect that at each fire some warm beating

heart will be still, some active limbs will be stretched powerless on the gory field, some will be crushed, some die from fever and want ! and the sons of luxury, who, when at home, can satisfy the most frivolous wish, will vainly cry for a drop, only one small drop of water !

CHAPTER VI.

WE arrive now at the period of our tale when the great victory was achieved, which won for Joan her title of the "Maid of Orleans." Scarcely had she appeared at the head of her escort, when marvellous tales of her wonderful power spread through the camp; and, at last, reaching the enemy in the most exaggerated terms, inspired the soldiers with such panic fears, that numbers of them returned to England, in consequence of which a proclamation was issued, to apprehend all those who deserted from France, for fear of the maid.*

At last the English raised the siege, and the eventful 29th of May, 1429, dawned in all the splendour of that delightful month. As Joan placed on her armour that morning, her thoughts

* See Markham's History of France.

reverted to the first morning of that month, when she was at Domremy, wafting her sighs and hopes in the green fields. Oh ! she had much to be thankful for ; she had headed the troops in several skirmishes, and had hitherto been successful ; she had caused the greatest panic in the enemy's army ; little cared the poor girl for her want of sleep, for the fatigue she felt in each delicate limb, for the fresh colour faded for ever from her pure cheeks ! Oh, it had been better for humanity had poor Joan died from fatigue and exertion ! And oh ! if that fond mother, who was indifferent from natural disposition, not from want of feeling for Joan, had seen her poor child rise from her hasty slumber, her pale cheek even paler than the day before, and her brow wet with the moisture of anxiety and fatigue ; had she seen how differently she raised her helmet to what she did her pitcher at Domremy ; oh, she would have cried over her child ;—and could she have gone further with Joan, could she have followed her to the scene of action, have beheld her raising her young voice high above the din of arms and the firing of cannons, could she have seen her on her white charger, dashing foremost in

the fight, her white plume waving and nodding to the breeze; could she have seen the fire directed at the young creature's life, warded only by her extraordinary agility;—oh, for that mother's cries, for her agonised fears! but she saw nothing; heard only that her child was in the king's favour, and the poor, vain woman thought only of her heroic, her high-minded Joan, as a person fortunate enough to please royalty. It is indeed miraculous how Joan escaped that dreadful day; it may be that the English fired with wavering hands on the fair general; but more than that, as Joan had herself said, she was but a tool in the hands of mightier hands, and she was not yet to leave that land she had so marvellously assisted in asserting its independence over its powerful enemies.

The English, after fighting bravely but ineffectually, were discomfited with severe loss, and the Regent Bedford, unaccustomed to such reverses, swore a terrible oath, "that if he only had the Maid of Orleans in his power, he would revenge his loss." The evening shades beheld the French again in possession of their beautiful town; and Joan exhausted,

but proud and happy, was borne on a litter to the king, unable any longer to sit on her equally fatigued charger, who had so bravely borne his young burden through the fight.

The king was in a regal tent surrounded by his chief ministers; Joan endeavoured to walk towards him, but sunk back again in speechless faintness. The king and the Duke of Bretagne arose, and lifting Joan carefully from her litter, they placed her on a soft couch, and gently disengaged her armour; when, oh! horrible sight! the blood escaped in torrents from a deep gash in her beautifully rounded throat. The king himself staunched the wound with his pocket handkerchief, whilst young Dunois, who had never forsaken poor Joan in her greatest dangers, now ran for medical aid. The young warrior's wound was not absolutely dangerous, but required the most gentle treatment; the greatest possible quiet was recommended, and Joan was transported to a beautiful house belonging to the Duke of Bretagne, where every possible care was taken of her. Her good constitution, easy temper, and her youth, triumphed over her sufferings, and the beginning of July witnessed her reco-

very ; the people proclaimed it with shouts of gladness, and the king presented himself the first before her.

“Joan,” he said, “from this moment I ennoble thee and thy family, and will provide for them in such a manner that they shall support their new dignity. Oh, Joan ! how can I thank thee ?”

“Gracious sire, I have only half fulfilled my promise,” modestly replied Joan, “fix the happy day when I shall see you crowned in all due pomp at Rheims, and then, oh king ! will I return in peace to my native village.”

“Never, never,” cried the king ; “no, Joan, every sentiment of my heart refuses it. Besides, you must still lead my forces ; the English are repulsed, but not conquered. What think you of them, Joan ?”

“They are a brave and warlike nation ; but oh, seigneur, there is something in the Regent Bedford, which struck me with terror.”

“Thou fear ! Joan ?”

“Yes, my liege, I confess it ; I have encountered his look in the battle-field, and, whilst many of his brave men shot at me at random, as if unwilling to aim at a woman, he

gave me a deadly look, and then fired ; I believe my wound was from his hand :” and she placed her fingers on her pretty throat, marked with the recent wound.

“ Poor Joan, thou art a brave and loyal creature ; and since it is thy wish to see me crowned, we will fix the 7th of July for the ceremony.”

Joan expressed her thanks, and was again left alone. In a few moments she heard a low tap at her door.

“ Come in,” she said.

The words had hardly passed her lips, when Gustave Ambroisy entered, so pale, so haggard, so thin and worn, that Joan started up uttering a scream of horror, and they both gazed at each other, for Joan too was altered ; and yet some would have thought her far more interesting ; but poor Gustave was everything in the world except romantic ; he, therefore, sighed as he gazed upon her. Where were the roses on the cheeks ? the hardy frame ? Was the pale-faced, interesting creature before him, really Joan, his Joan ? Forgetting his own sufferings, he asked her, in a voice of anguish, “ if she felt very ill ?”

"No, Gustave," she replied, endeavouring to smile;—oh, what a shadow of a smile!—"Oh, no! I have been wounded, and am weak from loss of blood and fatigue; but you yourself, Gustave, you have been ill?"

"I tell you the truth," replied the poor fellow, sinking on a chair; "I shall never recover. I heard of your departure, and, oh, my Joan! that I could have borne, but to fancy you on the field of battle, whilst I, a poor cripple, could not witness your glory; or, perhaps, Joan, if you had fallen, I should, I thought, at least have been there to catch your last sigh! No, I could not bear it, so I set off to meet you; your name was echoing everywhere, was pronounced in veneration, was hailed with cheers! Oh, Joan! I thought my sufferings light, when compared with the joy of meeting you again; but stumbling in the dusk against an iron bar, I fell down, my recently set limb was dislocated; still on I went, and now I am very ill!" His voice grew faint, his eyes closed, and but for a slight breathing, life would have appeared extinct. Joan lost no time in calling medical advice; but, alas! the worst fears were realised,

mortification of the limb had begun, so increased by fatigue, that to amputate the limb was now useless,—the young soldier's fate was sealed, he must die.

Poor Joan, she wept not, but she stood gazing on Gustave's pale face, and desiring to be left alone, she approached the bed on which he was placed. "Gustave," she gently said. At the sound of her loved voice, he opened his eyes and endeavoured to speak. The sounds were so imperfect, that Joan knelt close to him; then she heard the soft murmur, "Joan, do not forget me!"


She held a reviving scent to his face; she bathed his temples with vinegar, and kneeling down again, she propped up his head, and had the satisfaction of seeing that he was conscious though very weak.

"Gustave," she said, taking his hand, already damp with the cold dew of death, "if it be any consolation to your soul in its passage from this world, know, that I love you: but would have sacrificed that love to my great undertaking! Oh, Gustave! I promise you solemnly never to listen to words of love, to remain faithful to your memory; though no longer to

be your wife on earth, we will meet again, dearest, in a better world, where strife and the battle din are over ! You are only gone a short time before me, I feel it, Gustave ! now are you happy ? ”

“ Oh, my beloved Joan ! ” these were the soldier’s last words, the effort cost him his life : he expired, uttering the words. One deeply drawn sigh, and Gustave Ambroisy was no more.

And Joan was left alone with the dead. In the battle-field, thousands had been slain around her, but they had fallen suddenly ; the shrieks of the wounded and dying had mingled with the din of firing, and the young girl had never paused to look at the changing face, and never before seen the marble hue stealing over loved features. Gustave’s death affected her much ; she would have lingered long, buried in a reflective and mournful train of thought, but was interrupted by a messenger from the king, requesting her presence. She paused to arrange her dishevelled hair ; she would willingly have dispensed with the tedious etiquette of the court, but having resumed her female attire, the king himself had ordered her to dress sumptuously.



She therefore cast one last look at poor Gustave's remains, cut off one of his glossy brown locks, and throwing her shawl over the corpse, followed a servant who came to assist her to dress. Her robe was of crimson velvet, trimmed with white pearls, a girdle of pearls, as well as a chaplet round her head, were all in unison, and so complete was the disguise, now Joan's face was thinner and so much paler, that she had some trouble to recognise herself. The ceremony of dressing completed, Joan left her room: young Dunois was in the vestibule, waiting to introduce her to the assembly of persons of rank, who were all eager to greet the beautiful "Maid of Orleans."

Joan, who was now noble, and whose merits entitled her to pre-eminence, entered, leaning on young Dunois' arm: she advanced to the king, and bending gracefully to him, was on the point of saluting him, when she caught sight of a dear, a beloved face, and the next minute she was clasped to her mother's breast. Joan's mother, no longer the "good woman of Domremy," but a nobleman's wife, richly attired, and followed by a troop of handsome rosy children, was still the homely peasant

woman in heart and feeling. Her unaffected manner of greeting her child drew forth tears from every spectator. "Ah, my child!" she said, in her own peculiar provincial dialect, "thou hast gained laurels but lost thy roses!"

Joan faintly smiled.

Oh, that sickly smile! how it went to the mother's heart! how it spoke more forcibly than words, of nights spent in watching, of days exhausted on the battle-field.

"Oh, Joan!" she continued, "come back to thy native village! return with me, my lily of the valley, to regain thy freshness! and, Joan, thy pet-lamb is again with us! young Gustave Ambroisy brought it back, I know not why!"

"I do!" exclaimed Joan, bursting into an agony of tears.

With great delicacy the courtiers withdrew into the adjoining apartment, and the mother and daughter were left alone. Amidst tears and sighs, Joan informed the good woman of the dreadful scene she had just witnessed; and the latter, notwithstanding her fine dress and new position in life, ran up-stairs to assist, and give every possible care that the sacred duties paid to the dead should be performed with due

reverence. The king defrayed all expenses, and poor Joan had the melancholy satisfaction of weeping over her lover's tomb. Who, that has ever enjoyed the luxury of woe, of weeping over the dead, would exchange that soothing pleasure for any the world could give? Oh, that was most gratifying to Joan's heart! she rose early, and repaired to the little church-yard: she thought it would be bliss in death, to repose near one who had so tenderly loved her in life, little thinking that her remains would require no resting-place. But we will not anticipate; for if any of us could look into futurity, could we know for a certainty what a week, a day almost, what an hour would bring to us, where would be our interest in life? Where the spring which moves us on? Where the irresistible power which induces us to avoid danger, and to take care of the life God has given each of us, as a boon to cherish and provide for. If the thriving man of the world, though now industriously pursuing his career, knew that on such a day, he would lose his fortune, would he go on in industry? No; he would pass his life in idleness, giving himself up to what he

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would call his fate. If the tender parent, watching over her offspring, could know for a certainty that she was only with such careful assiduity, rearing the tender plant to bloom until a stated day, then wither and die ! could she fulfil her maternal duties with equal pleasure ? Oh ! no, she would strive to wean her affections from a being of whose butterfly existence she entertained no doubt. If poor Joan could have taken a peep into her futurity, if she could have foreseen her approaching situation, deserted by those she had served at the risk of her own life ! betrayed by one of her own countrymen ! neglected by her king, and tortured by her enemies ; it is more than probable that she would not have had sufficient courage to continue her arduous career. And as even in indulging in romance, we can think at the same time of more serious and important subjects, let us turn them to " Him who was pierced for our sins." By his Divine nature all secrets were to him as the clear noon-day. He who was with the Father from the beginning, knew well that to work out his great work, to win a crown of life and glory for those who believed, He must first suffer an agonizing and

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cruel death, must submit to insults, be left alone in his hour of suffering and death. But we cannot approach His Divine nature ; wisely then are our various trials hidden from our sight ; how gradually they generally come, how kindly does that Almighty hand who sends them, give us with the trials some healing consolation to cure the wounded spirit, and pour balm into the sinking heart !

Let us then never despair, difficulties will arise in our passage through life ; it is the common lot of mortals, and these trials serve two important purposes ; in the first place, by the manner in which we bear troubles, we evince plainly whether we are by faith “ God’s elect ;” secondly, they wean us from too great love of this world. If a rich and prosperous man had no reverses, if he floated continually on the surface of a quiet ocean, without even the exertion of avoiding sands and shoals, where would be the trial of his faith ? What merit would he have for never repining ? No, no ; our Saviour has said, “ how hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven ;” and surely we can all understand the meaning of that declaration. Oh ! then let those who are

rich be lowly, and rather take the "lower place," that they may be told, "Friend, go up higher." Let them employ their wealth in acts of charity, in deeds done in secret, for which their "heavenly Father will reward them openly;" then will their riches work "not to the hindrance, but the good of their souls."

CHAPTER VII.

JOAN'S mother having vainly endeavoured to persuade her to return to her native village, left her daughter to fulfil what she considered the second part of her mission, and laden with riches and the good wishes of the whole court, she herself bade Joan farewell, and returned to Domremy to charm the hamlet and its neighbouring villages with the account of her daughter's adventures. The seventh of July at length arrived, and Charles was crowned with the greatest possible pomp by the Archbishop of Rheims, in the ancient cathedral where his predecessors had undergone the ceremony before him. Joan was at her own desire clad in armour, her bright eyes again regaining their brilliancy, as she looked round, and contemplated the wonderful events she had been able

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to accomplish. The inhabitants crowded together in concourse of thousands and thousands, all curious to behold the young enthusiast, whilst those who could only see the top of her snowy plume, retired contented, believing that even that insignificant bauble waved in a meaning manner. The scene was extremely animated, the nobles as well as the principal officers were sumptuously clothed, every colour possible, worked in silver, gold, and studded with precious stones, was displayed to advantage in the short graceful cloaks then worn. The cathedral was surrounded by the military, Charles' cross bow-men, clad in short red coats, their knees bare, red sandals round their hose, carried mock bows and arrows, the string being of silver cord, and the arrow also of silver; these bow-men formed a circle round Joan, and appeared to take the greatest trouble to shield her from the pressure of the crowd. In the cathedral, hundreds of wax tapers were burning, the pictures of the saints were uncovered, and the altar displayed vases and plates of massive silver, whilst conspicuous above all was a beautiful picture representing Joan asleep in a field, whilst in the air above, numerous angels with

beaming, smiling, fresh cherub faces were holding nightly communion with her. The archbishop and his brother clergymen had on the most elaborately worked canonical robes, whilst their long golden worked trains were supported by little boys called "enfants de chœur," clothed in the purest white, with chaplets of white beads round their heads; these children advanced to the steps of the altar, sung a sacred hymn, and then burst forth in a sweet chorus in praise of Joan, asking the Almighty to bless and preserve her: the strain of the music was simple, but the young voices were so sweet, and uttered the notes with such accuracy that a thrill of admiration was felt by every one present. When the crown was placed on the king's head, the cannons roared, the music of the military outside mingled with the deep cathedral organ, Joan's wish was fulfilled—her king was crowned!

Joan was not ambitious; perhaps no one in the records of history ever began a life of adventures with so little thought of personal aggrandizement, or caring so little for honours shown to herself; and now that her mission was accomplished, the modest heroine had only one wish, to see again her native village, and to

share with her family that wealth, which, thanks to her own brave conduct, her parents now possessed ; but the king would not hear of such a proposal ; he knew that Joan was still necessary for the safety of his kingdom, that the populace were animated by her to fresh action, that the nobles admired her, and consequently vied with each other to obtain her praise. So, poor Joan, more flattered than she had been before, blushing accepted her sovereign's eulogiums, and his positive commands that she should still lead his army.

Poor Joan's trials now began ; turn which way she would, she was flattered and courted, consequently, women became jealous of her power of pleasing, and the French officers at length were jealous that a woman should thus gain on the populace, and achieve such brave exploits. Young Dunois was the only one who constantly spoke in praise of the far-famed maid. At first he had laughed at her as an insane enthusiast, but after closely watching her through the vicissitudes of war, through her victories and subsequent honours, he had been much struck by the rare sight of a temper still mild, still lowly, bearing praise

and blame, admiration and contempt, with equal mildness; he had seen her uncontaminated by flattery—he knew her honour and principles were blameless, and young Dunois, the scion of a noble family, who could have courted the highest born, proposed, in the most honourable manner possible, to Joan of Arc, the “Maid of Orleans.”

Joan was not flattered by the offer, she was only sorry to have it in her power to refuse; she modestly told her noble suitor that she was much beneath his station of life, that her affections had never been very strong, her whole heart having embarked in the one cause which thus procured her the honour of his acquaintance; she even confessed that such love as she had to bestow, she had buried in Gustave Ambroisy's tomb; and the poor young girl thought she had been candid enough to prevent further conversation on the subject. Alas! she knew not what it was to contend with a courtier's wounded pride, doubly wounded in young Dunois' case, from the fact of his deep admiration for her. Ambition, too, had mingled with his love; he was pleased to reflect how Joan's fame, mingling with his

own, would render them conspicuous figures at court; he knew that the king would provide for her, and that when once "La Comtesse Joan de Dunois," no reflection would be made on her lowly birth, but that her youth, her many attractions, as well as her high exploits, would be the universal theme of praise.

If young Dunois had thought over these preliminaries, he had never contemplated even the possibility, much less the probability of a refusal; judge, then, of the mixture of rage and wounded dignity he felt, when Joan (who certainly was very cold,) gave him a decided refusal. Not mitigated by humbling reflections on herself, but plainly refused him! — he, the son of a count, descended from countless counts! Then jealousy, too, mixed with his grief, he felt assured poor Joan, with all her assumed modesty, soared even higher, and now the poor girl became the subject of bitter persecution. Count Dunois foolishly applied to the king, and his majesty, thinking he served his benefactress, pressed the union with such pertinacity, that in refusing again, Joan had the mortification of displeasing her sovereign. No power, no entreaties from the young suitor,

could change her. Her former indifference to him, now amounted to positive hatred. That she, who had fought as bravely as if her female heart were made of the roughest texture, should not, after her toils, be allowed to dispose or retain her affections ; her pride, the unconquerable pride of a high mind, was worse than the count's worldly mortification, and they now became bitter enemies. Nor was this all poor Joan had to contend with ; the English were so enraged against her, that Bedford would have given any reward to have her in his power ; her life was scarcely safe ; she was guarded by a strong watch by day and night ; but though in that, as in all other things, the king studied her comfort, she had penetration enough to discern that she was only thus protected to be of future use to her country. Again and again did the king urge her to marry Orville Dunois, and she now had the mortification of finding that her former ally, Agnes Sorel, was loud in her expressions of anger. That Joan, the peasant girl of Domremy, should refuse the graceful, the courtly Dunois, the only person at court Agnes had ever exempted from her railery, the only one whose good opinion she

valued. It was mortifying enough to her when she heard of his having made the proposal, but now her fury went to its greatest length ; she spread malicious reports of Joan, which touched her name, her honour ; then alone did Joan feel she was wretched, that she had been like too many risen persons, brought to the highest pinnacle of honour, to be dashed down to the lowest pitch of degradation. She, whose every thought was rectitude, to be spoken ill of ! Yet Joan bore all patiently, for she again saw that she could be of use to her king. And thus a year and nine months passed ; Joan still won several victories, still engaged in dangerous skirmishes ; but her greatest power was gone, that of inspiring the people with awful veneration. What can fly so swiftly as the malicious arrows of ill-spread reports ?—the innocent Joan, had, through false reports, lost her good name. The Duke of Bretagne was the only one who was still a friend to her, and as his office as Constable of France gave him great power over the nation, she had frequently occasion to consult him on matters of interest to the army requiring more judgment than she possessed. The Duke of Bretagne was a man of high in-

tegrity and great honour, he used his judgment clearly and surveyed Joan's character with the greatest impartiality. He admired her for her many excellent qualities, but he perfectly saw that she was only so far above other human creatures, that as she had been imposed on by her own superstition, to think herself inspired, after having once imbibed the idea of this inspiration, she had the extraordinary perseverance and courage of acting accordingly. Of course, he admired (who would not?) the daring resolve with which she had penetrated from her obscurity to royalty itself; and he admired her more when he saw her exemplary conduct, when exalted to rank and affluence she was still lowly and meek; and now he pitied her when he beheld her the subject of calumny; at first he visited her oftener, as others deserted her, and Agnes Sorel watched this opportunity of continuing her machinations, so that the Duke of Bretagne fell into the snare his own kindness had spread, and not having the courage to meet the charges, he grew cold to Joan, absented himself from her house, and under these disadvantageous circumstances, the "Maid of Orleans" found herself one evening with her band

of soldiers, making a sortie from Compeigne. The English had watched her closely ; ever foremost in danger, Joan and her faithful charger had left the gates ; the enemy gained upon her ; she called upon her little band, but they, knowing that their small number would be cut off by the force that was approaching, knowing also that Joan was the prize the enemy sought, acted in a manner unworthy of men and Christians ; they closed the gates, and poor Joan was left at the mercy of the enemy. Oh ! it was a fearful picture to look at ; on one side a barred gate from which her own base countrymen were flying at their full speed ; quickly approaching towards Joan a regiment of English troops, with John of Luxemburg at their head ; whilst she, the beautiful Maid of Orleans, stood her ground, undaunted by the hundreds and hundreds of javelins raised against her,—there she stood. It was an April day, the sun, having just dispersed a mist, shone brightly upon her, reflecting its rays on her polished armour. Her white conspicuous feather waved in the breeze, proudly as it had waved when she came forth to conquest. Joan raised her vizor, and when the enemy ap-

proached nearer, and saw that young countenance, pale as statuary marble, but still looking daring and brave, when they marked the steady gaze of the full hazel eye, the men looked upon her, then on each other, every spear was lowered, and the brave soldiers refused to advance. The action was not lost upon Joan, she cast one look through the closed gates, now as tenantless as the grave ; alas ! whilst her own countrymen forsook her, the enemy refused to take her prisoner. She moved not one step, but her appearance had something too majestic to look upon, as there she waited in her youth and her beauty for one of those many spears to pierce her heart.

The Duke of Burgundy now advanced to take her, and Joan drew her lance ; her sure aim would perhaps have felled even the mighty Burgundian general, but the closed gates suddenly were thrown open with a powerful thrust, Joan's back was against them, and the shock was too much for her, she fell to the ground, was pulled from her beautiful charger, and the courageous, beautiful, and unfortunate girl was relinquished to John of Luxemburg, the Burgundian general.

Joan placed her hands before her eyes, unwilling even to see who was the inhuman creature who had so basely overthrown her. She was not, however, long in ignorance of the name of her betrayer.

"To whom am I indebted for this valuable prisoner?" said the Burgundian general.

"To Monsieur Harfleur, of Picardy," replied the contemptuous man; "and," he added, approaching Joan, "I am now revenged, and I revenge my friend Dunois' wrongs; dost remember, Joan? Thou!" and he repeated the word as Joan had uttered it, when in her fulness of joy, she first saluted her king.

Poor Joan, she made no answer; she felt glad at heart that it was not young Dunois; she almost feared before then it was he, and with the generosity of youth, she felt unwilling that any one as young as herself should be so old in cruelty. Any fate was better than being exposed to the insults of the narrow-minded man who, in remembrance of the word spoken two years ago, had done the barbarous act, so Joan mildly told the general she was ready to follow him. He gallantly seated her again on her white charger, and Joan, placed

between him and another officer, followed by the soldiery, was now a prisoner, sojourning towards the enemy's camp. Poor Joan! she now felt the bitter pangs of the reverses of fortune; but the most bitter pang of all was the knowledge that a countryman had betrayed her. Yet she cursed him not; her heart, early trained to piety, supported her through all her afflictions; she prayed for her own safety, but she prayed also that God would forgive her enemies. Was not he who died for our sins forsaken by his friends? He who had fed them with food from heaven, was he not left alone in his hour of agony?—deserted he descended to the lone tomb; and perhaps so would she! But as he forgave his enemies, so she prayed to forgive hers. The holy workings of her mind gave such a purity of expression to her countenance, that the soldiers remarking it, shuddered to think what might be her fate, and not one shout of triumph was uttered when she reached the camp, and was left alone with the general.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHILST these events were passing at Compeigne, the Regent Bedford had been obliged to visit England, the affairs of the kingdom requiring his presence; but ever impatient to witness himself what the troops were doing, he only gave himself sufficient time to transact the necessary business; and, accompanied by his only and motherless daughter, Alice, he again crossed the Channel, and being extremely fatigued, rested at the principal inn at Calais, whilst the Burgundian general had secured for him the prize he had so long and anxiously coveted, namely, the far-famed Maid of Orleans.

Bedford had many estimable qualities, and in his treatment of the unfortunate Joan, he sullied his hitherto blameless character,—

before this event considered as the soul of probity and generous feeling. The best men have their failings; Bedford's love of power was the predominant feature in his character: to be defeated by the French forces was, in itself, a severe pang to his proud heart; but, to return to his native country with the mortifying rumour carried before his arrival, that he had been defeated by a woman, was a shock he could not recover. As Joan dreamed by night and thought by day, of her wish of serving her king, so Bedford's midnight visions were all centred on one point, to triumph over his female antagonist, to have her in his power, at his mercy,—alas! no great mercy could poor Joan have from his proud and vindictive feelings!

If Bedford was violent in his dislikes, he was doubly warm where his warlike heart loved. His daughter, Alice, was at once his only hope and joy: she had attained the age of nineteen,—that age when the heart is still glowing with its first warmth,—when it has not yet had time to be damped by coldness, and when friends anxiously shield the expanding affections, before leaving the young heart to take its flight unassisted and unprotected in the wide world. But

though at nineteen some young persons are thus anxiously shielded, others are already old in experience, from having long mixed with a world too willing to take advantage of the inexperience of youth; some have embarked with the happiest sunny disposition, but finding their good nature imposed upon, have become aged in feeling long before the lines of years are imprinted on the brow. Alice had been motherless since the earliest days it was in her power to remember: her education had been intrusted to a very amiable and talented lady, under the direction of the duke's sister. The duke, her father, had centred all his affection on his child; but his impatient, warlike temper, could not assimilate in taste with the gentle girl's pursuits; and Lady Alice, though doating on her indulgent parent, had never made him the companion of her thoughts. To feel perfect love towards a parent, how necessary that mental communion becomes! but Alice, who feared her father when he was in his passionate moods of pride, formed her own character, and moved, as it were, in a world of her own creating. The high powers of her cultivated mind, rendered, perhaps,

slightly morbid, from indulging much in solitude; and having no associates of her own age, imprinted itself on her bearing, and gave a decided character to her otherwise faultless features. She was tall and rather slight; her complexion was clear, but dark; her hair black and glossy; but her eyes were her great attraction,—eyes which told each passing thought,—eyes, which by one glance, could draw a person towards her, and cement the bonds of friendship, or on the contrary, dash a person away, as unworthy to hold communion with one possessing a thousand attractive qualities. Alice could not account herself, for the small number of her friends; but though she was too mild to acknowledge it, the truth was, she could not find any young person equally talented, and thus she cared little for mixing with a world, which to her had few charms. In her father's splendid mansion she surrounded herself with books, birds, flowers, instruments of music, and mental employments of every kind: but it was very rare to see the beautiful heiress of countless wealth venturing beyond her father's grounds. However secluded Alice chose to live, she was yet too young to dispose of herself; and her father,

when disengaged from the turmoils of war, would sometimes oblige her to mix in society, and to receive visitors. These were generally more disagreeable tasks to Alice than anything else she knew beside ; when, however, she once left her home for the gay scenes of life, she shone the brightest star in the whole party : the gems which adorned her hair shone not half so brightly as those radiant eyes, now flushed with pleasure, now deeply reflecting the mirror of her thoughts ! How pleasant was it for Alice to find, occasionally, some mind as loftily directed as her own ! how then she would bring forward from her rich mental store-room, the loftiest and purest thoughts ; and uniting thus the exquisite powers of a well-cultivated mind to the charms of a winning person, she then became perfectly unique in her way of pleasing, and thus Alice became acquainted with John of Luxemburg, the Burgundian general. He was the only one of her father's many military friends who had the least attracted Alice's attention ; and none but one who, like Alice, looked only at the mental beauty of intellect, would have preferred him to the gayer and more amusing courtiers

and military characters of the day. The general was much older than Alice, and certainly not handsome, as far as regarded regularity of features, but he was tall and commanding, and, like Alice, his eyes spoke the language of his heart; and long before he proposed to the English heiress, he had read in hers that he could win her heart. Alice consulted her father, expecting an unqualified consent; but the old duke had never thought of parting with his darling child, much less of giving her in marriage to a foreigner: he, however, wisely determined not to offer any resistance as to the ultimate marriage, only begging Alice to delay awhile, to let him give his consent at leisure, and study his son-in-law's character. He obtained his daughter's compliance, and henceforward the Duke and the Burgundian general were companions-in-arms. The duke watched him narrowly; once or twice he thought he was rather lukewarm in his attachment to the English cause, but his natural kindness of heart stepped in and made several excuses.

"He is a foreigner," he thought, "and though a personal quarrel with the king has alienated his heart from him, it is natural that

he cannot talk against his lawful sovereign!" so Alice was encouraged to believe in the future success of her suit, and the Burgundian general thought himself high in the duke's personal favour.

The general lost no time in sending an express messenger to the duke, giving him the welcome intelligence of Joan's capture. Bedford's joy knew no bounds,—he was like one bereft of his power of reason. Alice was perfectly astonished to see her father so loud in his protestations of pleasure. She remembered that Joan was a woman, and the softest feelings of her heart were awakened: she remembered that she was a heroine, and the noblest feelings of pity for her captivity were the result. The old duke was far too busy with his pleasure, to notice the dejection which stole over Alice's face, as she took her place at the breakfast-table. The meal was spent in unusual silence.

"To horse! to horse!" said the duke, rising, after a hasty meal; "and you, my Alice, had better remain here until I secure my prize, then I will join you!"

"Oh no, dear father!" replied Alice, rising also; "indeed you must take me with you!"

"What? are you afraid of letting me be in the young sorceress's power?"

"Oh father, she is not a sorceress!" said Alice, in a grave voice.

"Why, Alice!" replied her father, "you are not disloyal enough to take the Maid of Orleans' part? Ah! I have it now! you want to see the general, hey? Well, he shall have my consent to the marriage, now he has captured Joan! So, you want to see the general, hey, Alice?"

"I do want to see the general!" replied Alice, gravely.

"Well, then, quick! run up-stairs, and make haste! I wait for no one!" cried the duke, without observing the grave tone in which Alice spoke.

The father and daughter, and the numerous retinue they brought with them, were soon on their road to the camp, which was sixteen miles from Orleans.

In the meanwhile Joan had spent a night of feverish anguish; her mind, disturbed by the suddenness of her capture, was for a short time bowed down by affliction.

The Burgundian general treated her with

great affability, and was even much struck by her answers to his numerous questions, all expressed in a touching strain of piety; but when Joan retired to rest in the tent prepared for her, surrounded by armed men, she felt all the bitterness of captivity; oppressed by fatigue, she closed her eyes, and was soon haunted by the most dreadful dreams. Now she thought she was suffering intense agony; she implored her king's intercession, but he turned from her; she clasped her hands to Agnes Sorel, but she laughed at her; and Bedford appeared to her in the mock language of triumph, offering her escape through one path, that of joining the enemy's standard. It will be easily imagined that as Joan had hitherto placed faith in her dreams when they were to her advantage, she could not disbelieve them now, though they terrified her beyond measure. The Burgundian general sent for her in the morning. Pale and worn by her awful visions, she entered slowly between two armed soldiers. She had evidently been weeping, and the general, who was a great admirer of the fair sex, felt touched at the unfortunate maid's situation. He experienced a sort of relief in talking

of some one else as concerned in her captivity ; he, therefore, opened the conversation by telling her, that she would that evening see the Duke of Bedford.

Joan uttered an exclamation almost approaching to a shriek, and drawing nearer to the general, she looked upon him in the most imploring manner, earnestly beseeching him not to deliver her to her dreaded enemy.

"You should have thought of all this before, my poor girl. Why did you not pause and contemplate the end of those who go beyond what they are called upon to do ;—have you never thought of a prison, Joan ?"

"Oh ! yes, very often," replied the young girl, sighing : "think not, sir, I fear death ; if it be your will, I can die. I am now in your power, pierce my heart if you will, but do it quickly—anything sooner than be delivered to the regent."

"You are a strange girl, Joan," said the general ; "you say you fear not death, well, suppose then, the regent should so far extend his rigour, why fear it particularly from his hands ?"

"Because," replied Joan, "I hate your slow

deaths, your calm, calculating English trials. If they want my life, what use is there in bringing me to a mock trial?—what will it avail me to speak words which will not be believed?—why must I be gazed upon by the curious mob, and so slowly and gradually, but with certainty go to my grave?”

“But the pain of dying, Joan?”

“Ah! sir, if I had feared that, I should not have risked my life in battle, my white plume marking me as a target for the enemy’s fire. Oh! why did I not die on the battle-field?—why was I reserved for Bedford’s prey? Oh! sir, once for all, will you, can you save me from the regent?—torture me yourself, end my life now, but keep me from my bitter foe.”

“I am not a murderer, Joan,” said the general, “and could not have the heart to hurt you; therefore, you shall meet with no violence at my hands.”

“And you will keep me from Bedford?”

“That is a difficult thing to promise, Joan; but I will promise you one thing, not to deliver you to your foe, without previously ascertaining his intentions towards you.”

“May Heaven reward you for your kind-

ness!" said Joan. "One more question,—may I write to my sovereign?"

"No, Joan, that I cannot grant without further permission; but my poor girl, do you trust in princes' promises?"

"Oh! sir," she replied, "if I thought my sovereign would forsake me, gladly would I resign my life, sickened of the ingratitude of the world, gladly would I seek that better one, where we shall cease from every care, where there is no weeping and crying, where the weary are at rest."

"Then, Joan, believe me, at that price you have sold your life already. Mark my words, Charles will give you no assistance. Your power is gone, the bright star of your glory has set."

"God's will be done!" replied Joan, in a more composed manner, and then the conference ended.

Joan was taken back to her tent, and passed the rest of the long day reading her Bible; that volume, the parting gift from her friend, the curé, she had concealed about her person; it had been her companion by day and by night, and now, in the dark hour of her

sorrow, it proved her greatest consolation. As the poor girl poured over the sacred pages, each chapter brought its healing comfort; there, she read of that bright crown of glory to which she hoped to aspire; there she traced the words—"Oh! come unto me ye that are heavy laden, and I will give rest unto your souls!" Joan read, believed, and was comforted; she meekly bowed her head to the dispensation of Providence, and before she closed the volume, her heart inspired her to utter with sincerity, "Thy will, not mine, be done, O Lord."

CHAPTER IX.

JOAN had hardly finished her meditations, when the unusual bustle she heard without, gave her reason to believe the duke had arrived. Such was the case; but as it was late, and the duke had much to consult with the general about, he, after great hesitation, consented to leave his prisoner time to rest once more before the dreaded introduction took place.

The morning, however, quickly dawned,—time waits for no one. Joan, who had been dreading the coming day, watched the grey mist gradually dispersing, and a cheering April sun shed its rays on the little window of her tent. Poor Joan, two years since, was leading her flock to their pasture, in that pure and tranquil spot she was never more to see. The day-dream of her hopes had dispersed; clouds, impenetrably dark, had set in the page of her

destiny ; on all sides difficulties, imprisonment, or death. Joan had a brave heart, but it was human ; and like all mortals, she could not contemplate death without shrinking from its pale hand. Then, in that lone hour, she thought of Gustave and his quiet grave, and buried in thought, she quietly remained until summoned to the regent's tent.

Bedford was seated on a crimson velvet chair, his feet rested on a velvet cushion ; by his side was Alice, paler than usual, wearing an expression of thoughtful melancholy. The Burgundian general was leaning behind her chair. She had had no opportunity of speaking to him ; the regent rose to fetch his tablets which he had left in the next tent, and Alice, seizing the moment, turned towards her lover and said,—“ John, if you love me, give not up the unfortunate Joan to my father ; not a word—he is coming.”

The general had no time to reply, before the prisoner entered the room. The state of her mind had greatly weakened her bodily frame, and her face would have moved the compassion of the most hardened, but Bedford had steeled his heart.

“To think of that pale-faced girl vanquishing me,” he muttered; “of what stuff are the Frenchmen made to follow such a general!”

Joan cast a hurried glance at the haughty English nobleman, who returned it with the greatest coolness, and she then looked at the general, his answering nod cheered her; but the look she received from Alice’s dark eyes, caused her heart to throb with gratitude. Their eyes met, and in that gaze, how much beauty of expression! Joan’s imploring look was met by such a compassionate, soul-searching return, that through all her trials she never forgot it. Not like Agnes Sorel, did the love of romance mix in that look, it was such a gaze as we delight in supposing an angel would direct towards us, whilst protecting us from harm. The duke was now all eagerness to begin a conversation with Joan, who stood as immoveable as a statue.

“Well, my girl,” he began insolently, “as you can guess all things, and have hitherto proved correct in your guesses, can you tell me how long you have to live?”

“As long as you choose that I should, as

I am your captive," replied Joan, raising her eyes to his searching look.

"Hump!" said the duke; "and you are prepared to die, of course."

"Oh! no," replied Joan; "we none of us are prepared, and let me tell you, that if you thus barbarously cause my death, you will not be prepared to answer at the throne of grace for your cruel deed."

"Then how will you answer for the many lives you have taken, Joan?" said the Burgundian general, not willing to take too sudden an interest in his captive.

Joan answered without hesitation, "All those I have slain, or by my example caused to be slain, met equally, hand to hand. You made inroads in our country, and we had every right to drive you from it; we sought you not in your own land, we only wished to assert *our* rights, but if, after the battle was over, a wounded or straying soldier from your army was found, he was fed, and then suffered to go his way. Will you, great duke, take advantage of a female prisoner thrown in your way by the treachery of a countryman? And will you," she added, appealing to the general, "deliver me to the duke?"

"And if you are allowed to go, Joan, what would you do? Why not join our standard?" said the general.

"I!" shouted Joan.

"Yes!" replied the duke furiously, taking up the conversation, "or you die."

"Oh! welcome death," then said Joan, "much more welcome than a life of perjury;—but listen to my words, Bedford, my death shall be fully revenged, your glory shall fade away, your days shall consume in vain graspings after victory and success, your possessions in my poor country shall leave you one by one. The Maid of Orleans' death will satisfy your vindictive feelings, but it will not bring you the advantages you seek."

Joan would have continued, but a suppressed scream called her attention, Alice had fainted. The general lifted her in his arms, and delivering her to her father; he took Joan by the hand, and bowing to the duke he said,—

"Your grace has not asked one very necessary question, will I deliver my prisoner into your hands?"

"What say you?" exclaimed the incensed

Bedford, almost letting his precious burden fall to the ground.

“That unless I have every reason to believe the maid will be honourably treated, I will not resign her to your will; I have promised it to my conscience, and I have also promised it to one dear to me,” he added in a whisper. Alice, as she revived, caught these words, and the Burgundian general was repaid by one of those expressive glances Alice directed towards him.

Bedford was so taken by surprise that he could not command his voice. Alice now making an effort to recover herself, and vanquish the momentary weakness which had oppressed her, begged her father to leave her alone with the general. The duke at first refused the request, but thinking she wished to enforce obedience to his commands, he at length complied, and leaving the tent with angry strides, Alice, Joan, and the general were left alone.

“Young girl,” the former said, approaching the prisoner, “I will confess that you have inspired me with deep pity, I cannot think of your perishing in your youth and freshness, without making one great effort to save you,

nor do I wish my father's conscience to be burdened with the sin of causing your death ; were you guilty of any crime, Joan, I would not even make an effort to save you, but I again repeat it, I deeply pity you. What if my father placed you in some retreat where you would have no temptation to seek, or meet with adventures, could you not remain quiet, Joan ?”

“ I should have no choice then, I suppose, lady ; when the tamed lion is confined in his iron cage, he is sullen but quiet: break the cage, oh ! how he will bound over moor and heath, until he range again freely in his lofty forest !—thus would the Maid of Orleans be.”

“ Joan, your ambition is irresistible, it will bring you your own death.”

“ Oh ! call it not ambition ; I have coveted no high rank, I have sought for no recompense. Oh ! I am not ambitious, lady.”

“ Then you are obstinate,” said Alice, “ which is worse.”

Joan shook her head mournfully, and Alice, repenting of her harshness, turned to the general.

“ If you have ever loved me,” said she, “ you will not be hasty in giving up your prisoner.

Remember, my father is warm, and Joan's spirit will perhaps infuriate him more than he is now against her, I therefore shall make this the test of your love for me."

"But Alice, my beloved Alice, should your father on the contrary refuse me your hand, unless I deliver Joan to him?"

"Then," replied Alice, a shade of deep dejection coming over her face, "I promise you to fulfil my word; I should be sorry to displease my father, but I cannot risk this young creature's life. Surely when years glide by, and my father sees me happy with the man he once admired, surely he will relent; so, if you will trust me, John, our treaty is finished; and you," she added, turning to Joan, "you must take no advantage of my kindness, but in the solitude in which you will now be kept, you must meditate upon your future fate, and think well that one word your hasty, high-spirited tongue gives utterance to, may lose you, notwithstanding all my endeavours to the contrary." She extended her hand to the prisoner, who kissed it with tears of gratitude, and thus they parted.

When Alice rejoined her father, she was astonished to find he asked her no questions

whatever ; all traces of his late ebullition of temper had vanished from his countenance, a smile even played round the corner of his mouth. Alice perceived at one glance that the duke had made up his mind to some plan from which no one could turn him. He spoke of the mildness of the day, of other casual circumstances, of every thing but the one subject which was filling Alice's heart. He passed the general, and, mystery of mysteries ! he actually smiled upon him, and made some remark of most common-place occurrence. All this was extremely puzzling, no doubt, and in the meanwhile his messenger was rapidly taking his road towards the French king, and Joan's fate was in a much more precarious state than her friend Alice had any idea of. Alas ! it is but true, that to trust to princes is too often a melancholy deception. Charles now basely forsook her who had hazarded her heart's blood for his service. Oh ! worse than ingratitude, he made no effort to save her, he thought her capture would be the means of appeasing the regent. His eldest son, the Dauphin, already showed the seeds of that imperious temper which caused him afterwards to quarrel with his father ; the king

was entirely under Agnes Sorel's control, and that unfortunate woman (for unfortunate are all those who give way to the malice of revenge,) did all in her power to persuade the king how necessary it was for his future peace to deliver up Joan entirely to the regent, who had by his messenger sent a proposal giving Charles his choice, between the most exorbitant ransom for Joan, or her entire surrender into his (the regent's) hands.

Charles, half ashamed at his own baseness, summoned a council, but it was very evident the members met to do only his will and pleasure; Joan was delivered up to the regent with the paltry mitigation that she was to be lawfully judged by the principal members of the University of Paris, and that the judges alone should have power of deciding her future fate. And so with this show of justice poor Joan was already sacrificed, whilst she was congratulating herself upon her deliverance. Short-lived was the triumph she experienced, at her supposed safety; she was preparing to seek rest on the third evening after the regent's arrival, when the door of her tent opened, and Alice entered, looking paler than before, her

beautiful eyes red with weeping, her dress in disorder, and bearing all the traces of evident dejection ; she was quite unable to stand, and Joan gave her a chair, expecting, she knew not why, that something dreadful to herself would happen, connected with Alice's dejection. Neither had the power to speak for some time ; we shall therefore return to the regent.

CHAPTER X.

BEDFORD entered the general's tent, his joy hardly sufficiently concealed to appear decorous on the solemn occasion, as he read himself the letter he had just received from the French king, giving over Joan entirely to him.

The Burgundian general was taken by surprise; but he was too sensible to contend with what he knew was beyond his control; he therefore addressed the duke, but looked at Alice as he spoke: she had followed her father, and was anxiously waiting the general's reply.

"Take the maid," he said to the regent, "but remember when you are disposing of her fate that she is a woman, and that you are a Christian; think also how truly prophetic have hitherto been her words, and she threatens not slightly."

"I care not for her threatenings," said the regent, with a haughty curl of the lip.

"Then think," replied the general, "of your own daughter; oh! what would your feelings be if harm happened to her? Let her image inspire you with pity, her mildness and delicacy of feelings may weigh with you; therefore, Alice, plead for your unfortunate captive."

"Not my captive!" said Alice, and taking her father's hand, she added with tenderness, "and only my father's by the sad vicissitudes of war. Oh! my dear, dear father, have pity upon her, think of her youth, forgive her, if she has erred, she will repent. Oh, father, let me still as ever be proud of my only parent, let all Europe see how the great Bedford can forgive."

"Dearest child," said the regent, much affected, "it has never entered your mind to contemplate the evil that young girl you pity has occasioned. No, Joan, Joan, you should have mixed this catastrophe in your midnight dreams; and you, my Alice, think no more of it, you know not your father yet; all-dear as you are to me, my child, were you to have taken up arms I should have had no pity."

"But, father, I should not have fought against my country," replied Alice, "nor has poor Joan."

"Poor Joan! indeed!" said the regent, angrily, the more so as Alice had thoughtlessly struck the wrong chord by saying, "fought against my country," yet that was the only chance of escape he left Joan, and he felt she would never accept it.

Alice was again going to speak, but the regent silenced her by telling her he intended sending her to England, as the scene of Joan's trial, to which he must shortly attend, was not a fit place for her.

Alice knew her father's will was a law; she, therefore, only had the courage to request to be allowed to see Joan again; and her father giving her the required assent, she left him, and with a heavy heart gave orders to her attendants for her approaching departure. Fearing, however, that she should not have the opportunity of speaking at leisure to Joan in the morning, she took the advantage of the evening, when her father supposed her busily engaged in arranging with her maidens for the morrow's journey.

The words Alice had intended to speak to Joan, died away on her lips, and her courage forsook her, when the moment arrived to disappoint the captive's fond hopes. Yet Alice judged it better for a female to break the first sad tidings.

Joan greeted her new friend with a smile ; but it vanished from her lips when she saw the look of care on Alice's pale brow.

"Lady, lady, spare yourself the anguish you are come to prepare me for——"

"Not for death!—oh, no, I trust not," said Alice, gasping for breath ; "listen to me, Joan, dear Joan, for I admire you, notwithstanding all my father says, pray think before it be too late ! You will be judged, and severely judged, Joan ;—it is your sovereign's will."

"My sovereign!" exclaimed Joan ; "then, lady, my last hope is indeed over ! Why had not Charles the courage to pronounce my doom ? Judge me !—when my only fault has been that of serving him—aye, at the risk of my own life ! Let those who like, believe there is any justice meant in this pretended trial, but heed it not yourself. Lady, you are just, you are generous, and above all,

you are innocent. Can you lay any crime to my charge?"

"Joan, you are coming to so partial a judge, that my decision is not that by which your enemies will be guided. You have but one course left you: see how ungrateful your country has proved; I say not, fight against it; but I say, leave it to take its chance, and preserve your life."

"You know not,—you cannot know what you ask," replied Joan; "the fish seeks its own element, and though the smooth stream sometimes conceals the angler's bait, still it loves the water, and will not exchange its dwelling-place; the forest-deer, though often chased, still returns to his own haunts.—No, no!—I can die!"

"Then, Joan, you have more courage than I have," said Alice; "I cannot recal any particular crime of which I am guilty, and yet I cannot contemplate my end without a shudder. I love this world, notwithstanding all its vanities: and cannot bear the idea of those I like leaving it. The bird that flies, the flower which grows, the whole creation has infinite charms to me; and, Joan," the affectionate

girl continued, the warm tears of sympathy coming to her aid, "I shall very often think of you; and if you die, Joan, I will also learn to wish to leave this world."

"Oh, no, no! 'tis a sad lesson to learn," said Joan; "may your light heart long continue to enjoy the feeling it now possesses. You have not from early childhood bent your mind on one arduous, perilous course; if you had, the lesson would have come naturally—it cannot be acquired. As each day I fastened the clasps of my armour, think you not, sweet lady, it was natural I should doubt whether I should live to clasp them again? So far I feared not death; but from you I will not conceal it,—there is a bitter anguish in the thought that I shall perhaps perish in an ignominious manner,—perhaps be the one mark for thousands to look upon. Oh! it is a sad,—a bitter thought!" and Joan sobbed aloud.

"Dear Joan, how I wish I could save you! have you no friends—no one I could apply to?"

"No mortal aid can save me now," replied Joan. "Our religions differ, but they tend to one end; you will, therefore, remember me in your prayers, and, strengthened by my own

devotions, doubt not, lady, that I shall receive assistance from above; and though you see me now in the first burst of my anguish, you will know my real character when I have recovered the shock of my country's ingratitude. No one shall say the Maid of Orleans knew what it was to fear, and you will never say I wept!"

"Oh! why should you be ashamed of those soft feelings of emotion which only attach me more to you! No, Joan; all that I will ever tell shall not harm you; would that every one felt towards you as I do;—but I am come to bid you farewell, Joan."

"Are you going away?"

"I leave to-morrow."

"Oh! then may every earthly blessing be showered upon you," said Joan, laying her hands on Alice's head; "and may your heart long keep its happy peace! May every wish you form, be realised for your comfort! Thank you for all your kindness towards me;—nay, interrupt me not; say not you have done nothing: you have poured balm into my heart, you have given me the inexpressible comfort of sympathy. Oh! lady, when first your dark

eyes rested on my face, they spoke volumes to my heart. Before we part, and it will be an everlasting parting, unless we meet again in a world above, I would fain take one kiss from that hand which I doubt not has very often been stretched forth in charity towards its fellow-sufferers."

"Not my hand!" said Alice: and she clasped Joan in one long embrace. Their sobs mingled, and with one hearty "God bless and protect you, Joan!" Alice tore herself away from the distressing scene.

There are moments in life which have a powerful effect on our minds; through every scene of mirth, in the gayest hours of pleasure or the turmoils of a court, Alice never forgot that trying hour, nor that fervent embrace; it strengthened her character, and gave her a salutary lesson of fortitude and resignation.

Alice had hardly left Joan, when her maid informed her the general sought her for a few moments. Alice was displeased with her lover; whilst her reason owned that he was compelled to give up Joan, her softer feelings thought he ought to have relinquished his captive with more reluctance. Naturally candid,

she resolved to give the general her free opinion of his conduct, but when she met him, he was so depressed, his voice was so faltering, that Alice knew his own feelings were his most severe punishments, so she made no remark; he, therefore, opened the subject; he told her how deeply he pitied Joan, how much he thought there was to admire in her, and he concluded by declaring to the now pleased Alice, that he would watch over her, and that if undue violence were shown to her he would make it so public that she would be rescued by some means. "Your father," he continued, "has ordered me to proceed to Paris and assemble the judges for her trial; so far it is just, and remember, Alice, we must blend blame with admiration. A long imprisonment will be the least Joan can expect."

"And how delightful will it then be," exclaimed the kind-hearted girl, "to mitigate her imprisonment, to send her books, to draw her mind to different pursuits, and to lead her at last from her prison an altered being."

The general shook his head, for, alas! he knew human nature too well to contemplate the probability of such an end to the sad

affair ; however, he saw his Alice was happy, and he had not courage to disperse her pleasant illusions ; mutually pleased, they, therefore, ended the interview both had looked forward to with pain.

Joan now saw very little of the regent. She was quite ignorant of the general's departure : she only knew that Alice had left. She experienced a sense of loneliness from this event,—for it is pleasant to the most courageous mind to feel there is some fellow being feeling an interest in one's pleasures or misfortunes. The first of May was fixed upon for Joan's trial ; and now that it actually drew near, she wished it was all over, that she might be certain of her fate. On every side, dark and gloomy, she felt her fate must be,—for imprisonment to her would be worse than death. Again she turned over the pages of the sacred volume, making remarks on the leaves, in characters only known to herself, which she had practised years ago, in order to write down the good curé's sermons, little thinking that the innocent amusement would be brought against her, in the hideous shape of serving to accuse her of witchcraft. Thus

we go through life, small events multiply, and all united together form the great total of our lives. Our fellow-creatures make their own comments, and we are judged according to the spirit of our judges ; but, thanks to that great Judge, who sees with a different eye to the children of men ! the good works we do secretly shall all be rewarded openly, and the evil of our lives will, through faith, be blotted out for His sake who died to obtain this glorious comfort—" Believe in my name, and ye shall be saved."

Joan was congratulating herself upon the quiet hours she enjoyed, when Bedford appeared before her, and told her she was to begin her journey to Paris. We are sorry to record it, but not one ray of pity shone on the regent's countenance, and the poor captive turned away from his triumphant gaze, disgusted with his conduct, yet refusing to hate him for his lovely daughter's sake—for her who had come as a ministering angel to cheer and comfort her ; so whilst blessing the daughter, Joan's tongue refused to speak in anger to the father.

CHAPTER XI.

STRANGE, indeed, were Joan's feelings when she entered Paris. Well she remembered the first time she had approached the capital. Recollection crowded, thought sprang upon thought, until she fancied she saw the house where Count Dunois had taken her. There she imagined was the corner from which she had turned to take a last look of her benefactor; and now, after her victories were finished, what a reward for her toils—her watchings by night, and her trials by day. The regent had his private reasons for wishing the trial to be conducted as quickly and privately as possible. He had so managed that they should enter the city in the dark of the evening; he, therefore, reached the hotel the Burgundian general had prepared for him without attracting observation; otherwise, hundreds and hundreds of

persons would have hurried forth, all eager to behold the once brilliant Maid of Orleans.

The regent was determined poor Joan should at once feel she was a captive ;—he, therefore, allowed her merely enough time to rest a little from her fatigue, as she had lost her strength so much as to appear ready to faint ; and after giving her time to eat, if she were inclined so to do, she was placed between two soldiers, and taken away. Joan was too proud to ask them any questions, but she knew she was going to prison. As she passed the regent on the stairs, she avoided looking at him lest she should give utterance by her looks to words which her tongue refused to speak, for the sake of the kind Alice. Bedford was her father, and that was enough. Gratitude and affection sealed her lips ; but as she passed him, she involuntarily uttered a sigh, so deep that it approached to a groan, and spoke forcibly the anguish of her soul. That sigh, hardened to pity as he was, went to the regent's heart, and, in defiance of all his endeavours, sounded in his ears all the night. He even woke more than once, and still that sigh haunted his pillow.

But Bedford's purpose was too fixed to be

turned away by a sigh. The preparations began rapidly for the trial. Such of the members of the university, who were still at Paris, were called together, as well as several bishops. Bishop Lisieux undertook the office of head judge; and Bedford, feeling that there were few who would undertake to plead her cause against so many learned persons under his powerful direction, made a great show of clemency, by openly declaring that, as his purpose was to have Joan tried for "sorcery and heresy," so, if any of her friends would come forward and refute the charge, they would all be heard. The days quickly passed: the first of May arrived, and still no champion appeared.

In the meanwhile, the Burgundian general, who, appearing to comply perfectly with Bedford's wishes, was no longer watched by him, had disguised himself in a monk's dress, and, accompanied by his faithful squire, repaired to the French king's court. The report of Joan's refusing the Chevalier Dunois had reached him; and having himself a lover's feelings towards Bedford's beautiful daughter, he thought no one ought so willingly to plead for Joan as her discarded lover, who,

however piqued by her refusal, was, or had been attached to her, and would not probably think of her perishing so young, so guileless, without making an effort to save her.

In those days a monk was sure to find admission, even at the gayest court. Perhaps he came from the Holy Land—perhaps, bore a mission from the Pope—at all events, the courtly gates were thrown open, and the supposed monk was shown into a spacious apartment, and, according to his wish, young Dunois, much puzzled at the strange visit, received him with courteous affability.

“ Had he lately returned from Palestine ? ”

“ No.”

“ Required he money, troops, or any assistance ? ”

“ No.”

“ Did he wish to speak to his Majesty ? ”

“ No.”

And then the thought struck Orville Dunois, was he really a monk ?

“ No,” replied the supposed monk, throwing his disguise so far aside as to display an elegant military dress—at the same time, using the

caution to keep it partly on, so as to wrap himself up again in case of need.

“Who are you?” exclaimed young Dunois.

John of Luxemburg threw aside the cowl, and displayed his noble features to the chevalier, who, recognising him, shook him by the hand, and assured him that whatever motive prompted the honour of the visit, he should be honourably treated, and his secret preserved.

“I doubt it not,” replied the general, “or I should not have trusted myself here; but brave men can confide in each other, and I think the same sense of honour actuates us both. The purport of my visit is brief—the ‘Maid of Orleans,’ your once favoured Joan, is to be tried: in two days the trial will be over, and I fear that great will be her punishment; for Bedford is greatly incensed against her.”

“What can I do for her?” said Dunois coldly.

“Oh, can you ask such a question?” said the general, with proportionate warmth; “was she not once dear to you?”

“Ah, poor Joan!” said the young man, changing tone, “poor Joan! yes, I must speak to the king.”

“I shall now leave you,” said the general,

“satisfied at least that you will do all you can to save her ; and now farewell : if ever we meet, I trust I shall repay your hospitality, and if my reception is as warm at home as it is on the battlefield,” said he, smiling, “we shall not complain of coldness,” and thus the two warriors parted ; and young Dunois satisfied anxious enquiries about the monk, by saying he bore a message from the Count, his father. All Dunois’ interest for the Maid of Orleans now returned ; as long as she fluttered in the sun-shine of her glory he could not forgive her for despising his love ; but his heart always refused to believe the calumnies which were spread about her. Now, however, he buried all his wrongs in the one idea that Joan was wretched and forsaken, and he determined to assist her as much as he could. He first endeavoured to move Agnes Sorel ; but, alas, it is difficult to stifle the feelings of revenge in a vain woman. As long as Agnes could *patronize* Joan, she was all amiability ; but now that her protégée had reached the summit of her power, she was glad to think her pride would have a fall.

It was in vain that the young chevalier told her that Joan’s life was in danger, Agnes refused

to believe it: the young man could no longer contain his indignation. "Madam!" he said, "your conscience will ill-acquit you if you thus harden it against the dictates of humanity. When you took poor Joan by the hand, when you clothed her, and decked her head with her laurel crown, what said I?—that Joan had better return to her home. Oh! you who possess the most unlimited power over the king, why not use it to save her from her enemies? Though great is your power now, have you never considered that it may not last for ever? When your youth and beauty are gone, if you cultivate not the qualities of your mind, where will be your power of pleasing? Think how you would feel without a friend in need."

"In need!" scornfully repeated Agnes, "well, seigneur, since your powers of eloquence are so great, it was a thousand pities you did not use them to more advantage when you sued the Maid of Orleans' love."

"Nor should I have been so disappointed by her refusal, if her love had not been worth possessing," said the young chevalier, in a meaning tone of voice, disgusted beyond measure with Agnes' cruelty towards the unfor-

fortunate Joan; he left her with a stiff formality of manner which pierced her to her proud heart. A veil was drawn from his eyes, he had no longer any doubt the vain beauty loved him, the idea accounted for part of her cruelty towards Joan; but it did not diminish his disgust for her unfeminine conduct; and he had no other resource now left but to form a plan, which the sequel will unveil.

To have spoken to the King of France was worse than useless, as Charles was, or pretended to be, ignorant of Joan's imminent danger; and if he spoke of her at all, he persuaded himself, and vainly tried to inspire others with the belief that she would receive honourable and even lenient treatment; and when the courtiers gravely shook their heads, he asked them hastily if they wished for peace or a continuation of war, the question was quickly answered,—one was tired of the continual strife, another was sighing for a peaceful home, so Joan was sacrificed without one hand raised to defend her, amongst the throng of courtiers who had courted and praised her in her days of glory, in those sunny hours gone to return no more.

We have now arrived at the eventful day when the Maid of Orleans' fate was to be decided; when the young enthusiast was to be tried for "heresy and sorcery!" Alas! Joan's sensible mind knew well that she had very little hope now that her king had forsaken her. Bold and dauntless as she had been in the hour of danger, her soul saddened now at the thought of death. She wished once again to see her native village, to wander once more amidst those lovely scenes of nature, where she had first imbibed those dangerous ideas which now proved her ruin. She would fain be pressed again to her mother's bosom, once more hear that dear voice speak, look again upon her simple father, imprint many kisses on the younger members of her family, and then poor Joan felt she had nothing more to wish, nothing save the one pleasure she had long coveted, that of seeing once more the tomb where young Ambroisy's remains lay interred.

"But we shall meet again soon," she thought, "where all is peace, all is happiness!" Oh! that I could but gain enough composure to think well of preparing for the passage from this earth to eternity. At last, by devotion and

prayer, poor Joan regained her serenity ; but whatever is said in history of her extraordinary courage, we are not to suppose that she could meet her end without the anguish of fear and trembling, when " He, who had no sin," whose tenour of life was peace, who was " like a lamb without blemish," suffered the severest pangs of anguish in his last hours of agony. Life is sweet to all of us, and, sensible of our many faults, it would be presumptuous to meet death without fear and anxiety.

Poor Joan, with her undaunted spirit, her activity, her youth, and her late success recalled to mind, contrasted with her present lonely situation, was so weary of her short captivity, that she was almost pleased when a messenger arrived to prepare her to appear in court. The duke had ordered her to be dressed in black, and she attired herself in silence ; but she was reluctant to lay aside her armour, to which she had become fondly attached.

The court was crowded when Joan entered with a firm yet slow step, between two armed soldiers. Her black dress was made according to the fashion of the day, with a long train, her

head was covered with a hood, to which was attached a white lawn veil, which hung nearly to the ground.

The room in which the court was held had been arranged for the purpose, a number of seats were placed around for those who chose to witness the trial; these were crowded to suffocation; a platform was raised for the principal personages present. The Duke of Bedford, clothed in a crimson cloth mantle, trimmed with ermine, sat on a crimson velvet chair, his feet resting on a footstool of rich velvet, panelled with carved oak. On his head he wore a black velvet cap, ornamented with a long plume fastened with a diamond; the arms of his master, the young King of England, were worked on the front of the collar of his cloak, as well as on one side of his cap in golden thread.

The Burgundian general was seated at his right hand, also handsomely but not so showily clad; his mantle was of sober green velvet, trimmed with dark sable; on his head he wore a cap of the same material, with a border of dark fur, looped up at one side with a jet ornament, cut so as to represent the Burgundian arms. No feather waved in his cap, a digni-

fied gravity sat on his handsome countenance, and there poor Joan read pity and anxiety, traced in each line. On the duke's left there was placed a high-backed chair, curiously carved in oak, evidently of the greatest antiquity; to this chair was attached a sort of reading-desk, as in a pulpit, covered with crimson velvet, and in there sat poor Joan's greatest enemy, and, alas! her judge, the Bishop Lisieux. His face was dark, his eye-brows contracted, his eyes deeply set; these features, surmounted by a wig, gave an impenetrably harsh expression to his features. He wore a black silk loose dress. On the reading-desk before him were a heap of papers, intended to condemn Joan by the evidence they contained.

In the background, on raised seats, covered with crimson cloth, were a multitude of wigged bishops and grave-looking doctors, all directing their gaze towards Joan, who occupied a low seat placed in the middle of the platform, exactly opposite the duke. Joan's chair was covered with black velvet; and as she slowly sat down (according to the permission she received, in consideration of the length of the trial), a solemn thrill ran

through each spectator's breast. Her sable dress, as well as the sable seat, around which her white veil spread, gave her an imposing and graceful appearance. She was deadly pale, with the exception of one bright, glowing spot which the fever of excitement brought into her cheeks. Her large hazel eyes wandered from the judges to the concourse of persons around her, and rested everywhere, but on Bedford. Oh! how Alice's heart would have melted to have seen poor Joan alone amidst that terrible throng. There was a high-backed chair a few paces from Joan, but, alas! it was empty, it was reserved for any person who chose to defend the victim, and covered with coarse black cloth, to intimate by the inferiority of the material, how worthless would be considered the person who took the part of the persecuted "Maid of Orleans."

As it was possible the trial would last after the dusk of the evening, lamps were ready to be lighted if required. All was complete; all this to criminate the young creature who scarcely knew of what she stood accused! Be it remarked that her judges themselves professed the same religion for which she was called "a

heretic;" but there was this difference, that Joan had followed each form, whilst they had neglected the observances which their Roman Catholic rituals enjoined.

Joan looked anxiously toward the door, expecting, she knew not why, that some one would come to her aid; then feeling a bitter pang of disappointment, she uttered a deep sigh, which was echoed by many there present, who felt much compassion for the beautiful girl who stood alone against so many mighty judges. At last the judge, after arranging all his papers, coughing two or three times, and looking most deeply mysterious, arose, and an awful silence was observed through the court. All eyes were directed towards the bishop, whilst he (Lisieux) in a loud, clear voice called upon Joan to rise. She did so immediately, and her fine eyes were rivetted on the bishop, whilst he spoke as follows:—

"Joan of Domremy, you, a peasant girl, brought up in obscurity, living in poverty, of your own free will took up arms against England, notwithstanding we are bound by the possessions of the English king in France to pay passive obedience to him. You are further

accused of heresy, pretending to receive a mission from above, wrought in your mind by your own heretical principles, which you pretend to have found in the holy volume in which you have written marks unknown to any one save yourself, by which you have inflamed the populace; and, further, you are accused of 'sorcery,' by the means of which you yourself have resisted the danger of the enemy's fire, and by the influence of this sorcery led thousands of brave men to battle and to death! What say you now, prisoner, to these accusations,—say you guilty, or not guilty?"

"Not guilty!" replied Joan; "I am only"——but as she was going to continue her speech she raised her eyes to the Burgundian general, and beheld him making signs to her not to proceed. Joan, therefore, cast down her eyes, and was silent.

"You plead not guilty?" continued Lisieux, taking up her words, "Have you any one to take up your defence?"

"Alas! no," said Joan; "I am alone, and my words will not serve me, even if I desire my life; yet will I endeavour to defend it by refuting the horrible charge of sorcery brought against me. Oh! is there no one, amongst

the many who once held me in some repute, willing to take my part? Is there no one who dares openly to declare my innocence?"

Joan's cheeks were now flushed with the deepest crimson; her eyes were raised to heaven, as if imploring the protection from above which was refused to her by her fellow men. A murmur of pity ran through the assembled crowd. Suddenly a noise was heard outside the court, the persons assembled cheered loudly, the doors were thrown open with a violent crash, and a figure clothed in black, and wearing a silk mask, rushed into the court. The astonished spectators made way for the strange apparition, who, amidst the increased cheers of those without, and the suppressed joy of those congregated within, boldly advanced to the platform, stood opposite the judge, and loudly exclaimed, "I undertake to plead this young woman's cause."

"Who are you? and why come you here masked?" said Lisieux.

"It matters little who I am," replied the champion; "nor will I withdraw my mask unless compelled by force! There are many persons in this assembly, I doubt not, who feel

the necessity there is for being masked, as a proper caution for my future safety. Is there any reason why I should not defend this maiden?"

"None, none!" exclaimed a hundred voices at once; and, after some whispering from the duke, the bishop was compelled, though very reluctantly, to echo "None."

The business of the day now proceeded, breathless silence prevailed, whilst the judge, in strong language, endeavoured to arouse the tide against Joan; he failed not to expatiate on the many thousands who had perished on the battle-field, under Joan's guidance; he rested much on her pretended dreams, declared, that by her sorcery she blinded the king, her master, and concluded, by asking her champion what he had to say in her defence.

The unknown one then arose; and as he spoke, a thrill went through Joan's frame,—she thought she recognized the voice, but her ideas could not collect themselves sufficiently to think who the bold one could be. Her attention was rivetted upon him, as, raising his mask just enough to give clear utter-

ance to his voice, he dashed at once into the subject with a wild enthusiasm and a rich flow of eloquence, blended with the clearest and purest intonation of voice.

“He would,” he said, “begin from Joan’s earliest infancy ; he bore about him notes from the curé of her village, bearing evidence of her being a good, mild, obedient child ; suddenly she became fond of books, she studied every work she could procure. A young lady next came to her aid, assisted her to read the difficult passages, and taught her how to impress them on her mind ; but this young lady was not allowed long to continue her instructions : the unerring hand of death, which spares neither the young nor amiable on earth, here interposed, and the young Joan, thirsting for knowledge, was left alone to explore the mazes of literature, and to frame her own mind. Strengthened by her bracing manner of life, emboldened by a naturally energetic frame of mind, history formed her principal study, her frame glowed with enthusiasm, as she read of any of her own sex forming daring plans and achieving deeds of valour, and gradually inspired by her dreams, (which were nothing but the natural sequence of the

theme which occupied her mind by day,) she had thought herself a heroine, and the sequel showed that she thought not in vain. Even her bitterest enemy"—(here he bowed to Bedford)—"will own that she has worthily won the name of 'Brave Maid.' So far he hoped he had accounted for the manner in which she entered the battle field, and he trusted to disarm those who had accused her of 'sorcery,' by bearing testimony that on several occasions, particularly one, when a noble count had requested her to tell him his fortune, she had been unable to do so. The marks in her Bible were merely remarks he should imagine, and he conceived had nothing to do with sorcery. Nor had she, he thought, used any witchcraft to defend herself from the enemy. It was a panic, the fear of striking *a woman*, which had enfeebled the enemy's thrust. Again, she had not always escaped. The brave heroic maid had once been severely wounded. She had closed her eyes apparently in death; the king himself staunched the wound, and used every means to restore her to that world which she was considered then to ornament by her presence.

"And now, behold her!" he continued, "as vir-

tuous, as heroic as ever ! shorn of her brilliant ornaments, alone and forsaken—a mark for treachery and revenge; and the noble duke, her accuser, how could he steel his heart against her youth, and interesting position ? How could he boldly persist in accusing her of crimes the very name of which were riddles to the poor maid ? He would admit that Joan being found in arms against the enemy, merited to be regarded as a prisoner of war; but he contended that it was unworthy of the English, debasing to their noble nation, to exact such a high ransom for her liberty, that the king of France, impoverished by war, and having no personal fortune, found it difficult to comply with ; indeed, perfectly impossible, without displeasing those very nobles who had hitherto supported him.” Thus concluded the bold champion:—“ I place it on your consciences, your treatment of the maid. As she herself knows, as you all *must* know it — ‘ if you wish for her life, neither her power of eloquence nor mine will save her ; but remember, noble duke, you have a daughter. Like Joan, she is young, and like her, beautiful. What would you think, if assured that the sunshine of her youthful years would be cut off—

that she would wither as the mown grass? Oh, let pity, that noblest feeling of our nature—charity, that attribute which brings us near our great Maker—reign predominant in your heart. Great Bedford, think of an hereafter—pause, and think of your death-bed.” The eloquent speech was received with a torrent of applause. The bishops and judges fidgetted uneasily on their velvet seats. The Burgundian general nervously drew his handkerchief across his eyes. Bedford looked upon Joan, and then turned away; but, alas! his heart, though slightly touched, was still hardened. He held a short conference with Lisleux, and then arose.

“Your speech,” he said, turning to the unknown defender, “is, I will allow, ably delivered, and eloquently worded. Your wish is to serve Joan, mine to serve my country! Think not that a woman’s tears will disarm me! You have mentioned my daughter; she is dear to me, aye, dearer than all else besides! all except that love of my country, which is more powerful in my breast; and like the Roman who sacrificed his son to the public tranquillity, would I sacrifice that dear

daughter if she marred England's glory. Never will I give my voice to sanction Joan's liberty,—never! never! I have said it, I have sworn it, and now repeat it."

Bishop Lisieux then ordered the other judges to adjourn; their conference lasted more than three hours: when they returned into court, evening had drawn her veil over the proceedings; the sun's last lingering rays had shed its glorious red beams on the face of nature; the lamps in the room were lighted, reflecting Joan's marble-looking face, and shining upon her raven tresses, which escaped from under the veil in which they were confined, and clustered round her young face, notwithstanding her endeavours to keep them back.

Every heart throbbed, when a slight noise announced the judges' return; they glided mysteriously to the duke's seat, and one of the doctors gave his grace a paper, which the latter delivered to Lisieux, who, in order to show the people he was not influenced by prejudice, had not assisted at the conference. His grace nodded to Lisieux, who, acting as principal judge, now arose. "Joan," he cried

with a loud voice, "your future fate is decided; your crimes, notwithstanding the mild light placed upon them by your advocate, are nevertheless worthy of death; but in consideration of your youth, your judges have awarded you a milder punishment. You are condemned to perpetual imprisonment. You are forbidden, on pain of death, ever again to wear armour; should you be found clothed in steel, your life will be forfeited."

The persons congregated in the court appeared perfectly appeased, they had scarcely expected so lenient a punishment; but, alas! that which appeared to them a respite, was to Joan a death-blow. Oh! she who had from earliest infancy roamed free and unrestrained from dell to dell, admiring the beauties of nature, felt bitterly the full force of the terrible words "perpetual imprisonment;" they fell heavily upon her, but she murmured not; she clasped her hands in agony to her forehead, uttered one groan, and was borne senseless to her temporary prison, too soon to awaken from the swoon which buried in temporary oblivion her sorrows.

CHAPTER XII.

SAGES have spoken in glowing terms of the beauties of nature, of the power of scenery, of the delight of solitude! Solitude! What word bears so much delineation? The belle of a London season, tired of her life of gaiety, worn out in health and spirits, retires to some country seat, wanders amidst the beauties of nature, indulges in the delightful pursuit of uninterrupted reading, and returns again with fresh zeal to her town recreations; but she boasts with a languid smile of the "beauty of solitude." The peasant has no fashionable amusements, but he has friends and acquaintances; he lives with them, shares his village sports with them; occasionally he may be alone; he walks, and wakening nature at each step shows him some new attraction—he then talks of the "beauty of solitude!" Yes, philosophers may talk,—Socrates might

boast,—Diogenes, from his narrow mansion, might exclaim, but he placed his tub in the sunshine's rays. He could wander from mountain to plain, could watch the birds in their nests, and the swimming inhabitants of the stream in their limpid habitation. He could listen to the lark's song, and watch the budding freshness of the spring. He could inhale the perfume of the flowerets, and draw breath from the free air—then he bore witness to the “beauty of solitude.” But did he chaunt her praises within a captive cell?—did he look through iron bars, and try, vainly try, to look at the glorious sun?—did he waft countless sighs to breathe once more the fresh air?—and were his sighs echoed again only in his lone prison cell? Alas! this was to be Joan's fate; and she felt it to her heart's core. On recovering from her temporary illness, she was alone; and, proudly as she had borne up through the day's trial, now that she was left to herself, she gave way to the agony which oppressed her, in a gust of grief so violent, that her whole frame shook; and far in those stony walls the Maid of Orleans' sobs were echoed.

Joan's cell was small and dreary, containing

merely a bed, a few chairs, and a table, and lighted only by a small grated window, through which was wafted a warm, impure air ; a courtyard was situated beneath, in which the prisoners were taking their usual walk. Joan heard their forced laugh, and now and then distinguished loud coarse voices, talking in still coarser language, and poor Joan shuddered.

“Ah,” she thought, “they need not have called this perpetual imprisonment ; a few weeks will end my sufferings, and remove me to that happier land to which my eyes have always looked. And oh, my mother ! thou, who lately kissed thy jewelled Joan, who was proud of her as of a king’s daughter, — oh ! couldst thou see thy wretched child ! Oh, far sooner wouldst thou behold her dead, and cold in her coffin, than to think of the agony of mind which she endures. One comfort I have,” continued Joan ; “I am guilty of no crime ; and God will reward me hereafter, for alas ! here I have met with no recompense, which has not been doubly removed by this bitter captivity.”

Thus passed the first days of Joan’s imprisonment : gradually her mind became more serene ; her meals were regularly sent to her,

and were not of the coarse nature given to the other captives. Joan's jailor treated her with great respect; he was a short fat man, with a jovial expression of countenance, and generally announced his approach in the stony corridor, by singing a song to the melodious tune of the rustling of his keys against each other. When, however, he approached the cell where Joan was confined, he invariably ceased his mirth, and looked kindly—even compassionately—on the poor girl. Ah! there is a deep sympathy towards simple, quiet grief, which draws a tear from the roughest heart. Joan made no unavailing complaints; she uttered not a word against her oppressors, but her mild "good morning, André," or "thank you, André," won the jailor's heart, and cost him the few remaining tears he had in his power to shed. André had become attached to his office. We are told, that when the Bastille was broken, some of the prisoners left it with tears in their eyes, and one person refused to leave it at all, so great is the force of habit. We are further told, that the rescued prisoners wandered through the streets of Paris, and felt an inclination to return to the dismal Bas-

tille:—so was it with André. Had Bedford offered him a post of honour, near his own person, have clothed him richly, and fed him daintily, he would have refused the offer, and preferred his office as jailor, for there he was master! and little minds love to be masters; and certainly, whatever was the size of old André's heart, it is to be hoped it was much larger than his mind, for he never wished to enlarge that, and was satisfied with being able to read the name of every new prisoner committed to his care, and contented to have enough memory to remember not to neglect bringing them their scanty meals at the appointed time.

André's principal foible was one, alas! too common to men in his station, namely, his inordinate love of gold; it was this love which often placed him in the greatest difficulties, and on this occasion he could not resist showing a gentleman into Joan's cell, when he beheld in his hand two golden louis as a bright reward.

Joan was sitting in darkness, but she cared not; the shades of evening suited best her resigned but very mournful state of mind. Her Bible, which she had with difficulty preserved, was placed on the table before her, her face

was buried in her hands; she was much thinner than when she first entered the prison, and her eyes no longer shone brightly, but rested in melancholy contemplation, without settling on any particular object. There is no doubt that Joan, ever active when engaged, would, if her captivity had been much prolonged, have sunk into sullen apathy: it is often the case with great minds. She had nothing to think of save her melancholy fate, no books to divert her, nothing to do but to think throughout the dull hours and watch the sun in its course until it darkened her prison walls, when poor Joan knew it was evening. True she read her Bible, and the sacred volume gave her the only comfort she enjoyed, but as she read each remembered chapter, recollection crowded upon her faithful memory, brought to mind some spot where she had last read that chapter, some event which had happened to render that spot remarkable; and now that she was cut off from all human conversation, no wonder she indulged in deep reveries, and that her mind sunk into the apathy of resigned melancholy. She heard her door move, but thinking it was the jailor

coming to trim her dull lamp, she moved not, but continued in her reverie, her face still buried in her hands, when suddenly she felt them gently removed; was it a dream, or had he come to mock her captivity? Young Dunois stood before her.

"Away!" cried Joan, as if waking from a distressing sleep, pushing his hand from her. "Away; and come not to mock the victim betrayed by a countryman of yours, betrayed her to serve you."

"Oh! Joan, Joan," cried young Dunois; "you are altered in person, but more still, much more in mind if you can utter such words. Forget that I ever spoke of love, but forget also that we were ever enemies."

"Oh! I shall soon forget everything," replied Joan. "I feel as much altered as I look; yet a few weeks, and I shall be no more; a little dust will be all that remains of the once proud and daring Joan; perhaps, chevalier, when too late, I shall be pitied; perhaps you will be sorry that you made not some effort to save me."

"Oh! Joan; I cannot bear your reproaches. You look ill; and if your words prove true, do not think you went into the tomb without my

making an effort to save you. Do you know who defended you in court?"

"No," replied Joan; "I would have thanked him, but my head turned dizzy and I believe I fainted. I wish I could see my kind advocate; yet what could I do?—it is not always well for the gay and prosperous to see a person in a fallen state, there is something so degrading in imprisonment that any one coming like you do from the fresh air, with the glow of health upon the cheek and the fire of the spirits within beaming from the eye, must feel human nature is at best but mean: after witnessing my sufferings what think you of the changeableness of all below?—it would, therefore, only be a trying moment for my friend, whoever he may be. I will ever think of him, and did I know his name, I would mingle it in my prayers."

"Then I am blessed!" cried young Dunois, falling on his knees, "and bless me again, my Joan, more lovely thus in your lone captivity with those speaking eyes, than when they glowed with the lustre of a thousand diamonds. Now, Joan, am I forgiven?"

"Manfully you performed your task," said

Joan ; “and now, run no more risks for me ; my hours are numbered, my thread is woven ; all your wishes will be of no avail : go, Orville, —for misfortune makes me too proud to call you Chevalier Dunois,—go, and forget the unfortunate Joan ; go, mix in the world’s giddy throng ; go, sip honey from each dewy flower, think no more of sorrow, for pain and grief are associated with my name ; go, young man, and God bless you !”

“No, no, Joan,” cried the chevalier ; “I will not leave you thus ; I must impress on your mind that you are not, shall never be forgotten ; say, what can I do to serve you ? —command me, I will fly to obey you.”

“Well then,” said Joan, smiling bitterly ; “you know I am not a sorceress, but something within tells me I shall not dwell here long. Go then to Domremy, and take this lock of hair to my mother ; it was one of Gustave Ambroisy’s sunny curls, and though he was your humble rival, you are too generous to refuse my wish. Oh ! Orville, see now the wise dispensations of Providence : had I accepted your offer, what now would be your feelings when you beheld the bride of your affections thrown from

her horse, gazed at in trial in an open court, and then imprisoned and dying? No, my young friend, for by that name I will call you, we are, as I have always said, tools in a great Master's hand, and under far better guidance than our own weak judgment; think you now of all this?"

"I do," replied Orville; "for there is a wonderful power in your eloquence, and few could hear you without believing. I confess that I never thought so seriously before."

"Then do so now," said Joan, "whilst all is bright and gay, that when misfortunes press upon you, they come not 'as a thief in the night. However glowing may be your path through life, though it may be strewn with the sweetest flowers, still every rose has its thorns, and your course may be plentifully strewn with them. Now, I will not keep you any longer, lest danger should arise. Farewell, and if my image sometimes come before you, think not of me in my power and glory, but remember me lonely and forsaken; remember me in my captive hour. Would you have a token of my gratitude?—here," and she cut off one of her shining tresses, using Orville's knife, which

she saw in the pocket-book he had taken out to inclose young Ambroisy's hair.

"Thank you, Joan," said the young man, receiving the gift, and brushing away the tears which were flowing fast, notwithstanding all his efforts. "Oh! beautiful and unfortunate Joan, I will never forget you."

Joan suffered him to kiss her pale brow, and then the heavy door closed, the impatient André left her the lamp: the bars and bolts were thrown up, and again Joan was alone in her dreary solitude.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FEW days after Joan's interview with young Dunois, André opened wide her door, and informed her that the Duke was coming to speak to her. Far from being sorry, Joan was so resigned, so tranquil, since her interview with the chevalier, that each new event was now to her a matter of indifference. A spirit of calm content had succeeded to the anguish of her mind. Bedford entered; and though he had intended to speak haughtily, Joan's manner was so dignified, her carriage so imposing, and her appearance so interesting, that the haughty duke involuntarily bent his head, in token of salutation. Joan returned it by a low, but cold bow of the head, and continued standing. The duke begged her to sit down; and after a pause, during which time he was still looking at her, he begged

her not to be afraid of him, but to speak out plainly.

"I am not afraid of any one," said Joan, proudly.

"Now, do not shake your saucy head in that manner," said the duke, "for fear my anger should again master me. I intend you no harm. Why, Joan, your captivity has improved your beauty. I do not like your country, red-faced, fat beauties. No, Joan; it is a pity you have no looking-glass here to admire yourself."

Joan blushed, not from pleasure, but her face was covered with the burning glow of anger as she told the duke that it was unworthy of his rank to mock her, now that she was in his power.

"Then you do not like to be admired," said the Duke.

"I think of the fable of the fox and the crow," replied Joan; "and I fancy your grace wants some important point, which I cannot concede, or you would not flatter me."

"Right," said the duke, laughing. "You are a clever girl. What, then, if I say, that you are too young and beautiful to end your days and wither away in a prison! Now, do

not be obstinate, but reflect before you answer. Will you accompany me to England?"

"And fight against my country?" said Joan scornfully. "No, proud duke! never!"

"No, Joan; you shall not fight," said the duke; "but you shall hear my plans. Whether it be by your witchcraft, or any other power you possess, you have great weight on the fickle populace, who love novelty. Your very presence in England will cheer my troops. You shall not fight against your country, Joan; but I will procure you a splendid mansion, servants to wait on you, every luxury the tongue can tell. All I ask in return is that you should appear to countenance my army—that you be happy, and go not against us—that—"

"Enough—enough!" exclaimed Joan, rising indignantly; "false, base, mean duke!—what, would you boast that a little comfort could alter Joan's mind? No; take me out of the prison, duke; give me my sword and buckler, and I will engage in combat with you: if I fall, never mind; but bring no more to me your degrading proposals, or, in spite of my captivity, I will proclaim you to the whole world."

Go, Bedford ; I fear you not. I hate, I despise, I turn from you with disgust ; but I fear you not."


"I will be revenged upon you yet, Joan," said the duke, and with hasty strides he left the prison. In a few hours, Joan was placed in a covered litter, and borne, she knew not whither, with great swiftness. Once Joan wished to push aside the curtains which covered the litter, but her hand was immediately placed back ; and oppressed by fatigue, she closed her eyes, and slept. When she awoke from the feverish slumber in which she had fallen, it was perfectly dark, and the litter at length stopped below a large building. She was handed out. In answer to her question—"Where am I?"—the soldiers around her shook their heads ; — they looked grave and important, and were evidently executing orders they dared not disobey. Joan cast one glance at the building. It had the appearance of a strong old convent, inclosed in high brick walls, but the darkness of the night prevented her reconnoitring further. As soon as she alighted, a man appeared holding a light. He motioned her to follow him ; and leading the way up a steep and narrow pair of stairs, he at length

stopped before a large, but well-barred door. The fastenings gave way to his powerful grasp, and her conductor left Joan, saying, he would return with some refreshment. She was greatly astonished. Though the door bore tokens of the room being a place of captivity, the inside was more like a lady's boudoir. There were no windows, save small lattices placed high up and barred; but the walls were tapestried all round, and curiously contrived, so as to represent windows, wrought in light woofs so beautifully that Joan was enchanted at the pleasant deception. Round the room were disposed chairs covered with light blue velvet. There was an elegant bed, with rose-coloured hangings, trimmed with lace; pictures hung round the room; on the table, which was covered with a blue cachmere cloth, were arranged several books. A handsome lamp was burning in the room, which was cheerful in the extreme: a large clock pointed to the hour of one in the morning. Refreshments of the most delicate kind were handed to her. She partook of them; and, at length, throwing herself on the handsome bed, slept quietly, feeling the inexpressible luxury of all these comforts doubly

felt after her residence in her narrow cell. It may easily be imagined how surprised Joan felt at the novelty of her position, when she awoke in the morning. Now, she thought the Burgundian general had transported her in a place of retired safety;—now, she thought of Dunois, and even of her king; but never of treachery, or of a foe. Poor Joan! thy tragedy was now approaching its close.

After breakfast Joan opened some of the books, which were chiefly on military subjects. “Well,” said she, aloud, with some portion of her former gaiety, “how much the body depends on the mind. The wicked duke would praise me if he saw me now in my fairy chamber.” She touched each pretty chimney ornament, as if to assure herself it was all real and substantial; at length she paused before a high closet;—“Surely,” she said, “I may look at everything in the room, which some fairy seems to have arranged for me.” So she opened it and uttered a scream of joy; for there, hanging up before her, she beheld a complete set of armour: helmet, breast-plate, shield, gauntlets, vizor,—all complete; even a sword, in a handsome sheath.

The sight of the most rusty armour would have been a glorious prize for Joan, but this was of brightest steel, so perfect, so new. She took piece by piece from the closet: the clanging of the steel together was as music to her ears. She brushed the slight dust which had gathered from off the polished surface. She placed them all on the table; then, forgetting the article of her condemnation, forgetting even that she was a prisoner, and that it was useless labour to encumber herself with the heavy suit, she could not resist the pleasure,—she buckled on piece by piece,—even the vizor,—with astonishing rapidity; and, laughingly, drawing the sword from its sheath, she wielded it gracefully in her hands,—when, suddenly and as if by magic, a door was opened in the tapestry; Bedford, and the bishop Lisieux stood before her. The picture would be worth an artist's study; but difficult would it be to paint the look of triumph portrayed in Bedford's face. Lisieux's, always dark, was not lighted up with the same heinous smile; but he looked darker than usual. The light, fairy appearance of the room; the now delicate form of Joan, pliable and light, notwithstanding the steel which enveloped her;



the start of surprise and terror she gave require a masterly pencil to trace. All at once the horror of her situation burst upon her mind; she felt the trap she had been snared into. Her first impulse was to throw herself on her knees before Bedford, but she checked herself; a faintness came over her; she removed the vizor, to breathe more freely;—her face was deadly pale, but her purpose was fixed. She knew she must die,—she felt the dreadful gulf into which she had fallen, but, determined to meet her death with fortitude, she folded her arms across her bosom, and, still as statuary marble, waited the issue of the event.

“Joan,” said Bedford, in a low voice, speaking between his teeth, “you have but one course left, or you die. You know what will save you.”

“Bedford,” said Joan, looking at him so searchingly that the nobleman turned from her gaze, “work your will, rid me of a life which now has become a burden to me, but do not propose any terms with me. Flinch not from my gaze, I will not curse you;—the words are on my lips, but they shall die there. I will refrain to utter them for your daughter

Alice's sake. Unworthy father of such a pure creature, do now what you will."

"Joan! mad, foolish girl," persisted the duke, "think of your approaching torture, a horrible death at the stake awaits you. I cannot wait;—life or death are in your hands. If you prefer the latter, accuse your own blind obstinacy."

"Or, rather, my lord duke, your own baseness, in laying such a refined cruel snare to catch me, monster!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the duke, and the bishop feebly echoed the laugh.

Bedford stamped his feet, and the room was instantly filled with armed men, all ready tools in his hands.

"Witness, ye all," cried the duke, in a loud voice, "that the young woman commonly called Joan, sometimes 'Joan of Orleans,' has been found in arms, with a drawn sword in her hands, for which, in her last trial, the punishment of death was declared to be the consequence. All ye present look at her, this venerable pontiff and myself first bearing testimony. Say, then, is she not worthy of death?"

A faint but an audible "yes" was heard from

every lip. Bedford repeated it louder, adding, "Yes! say the word boldly,—it is time that all such vain-glorying seditious creatures should suffer the punishment of their crimes. Prepare yourself, Joan: to-morrow morning you die. Guards, remove Joan of Domremy, the peasant sorceress. Her own obstinacy has sealed her fate."

Partly stunned by the suddenness of the event, partly too indignant at the duke's perfidy to trust herself with an answer, Joan made not the slightest resistance. The duke ordered her to keep on her armour, and watched her till her light step died away in the distance;—he still lingered till he heard the keys turned in her narrow cell, (very different to the tapestried chamber,) and then only, for the first time, the proud duke seriously thought of what he had done, and pictured to himself the horrors of the coming morn, but his heart, like Pharaoh's of old, was hardened, and now he could not turn; so, half speaking to himself, half turning to the bishop, he said, "It is her own obstinacy."

"She is a beautiful girl," replied the bishop, abstractedly, as if answering his own thoughts.

"Does that influence you?" said the duke, with a sneer.

"As much as it influences you," returned the bishop, proudly.

"I suppose," said the duke, turning the subject, "you would like to confess the prisoner."

"I would rather the task devolved on some one else."

"What, are you afraid?" said the duke, tauntingly.

"Yes," replied the bishop.

"And pray, of what?"

"Of the consequences of this business," said the bishop, in a low voice: "remember, it is a solemn thing to die."

"I know it," said the duke, "but you shall not confess the maid;" and so they parted.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next morning, and, alas! the fatal one fixed for poor Joan's last tragedy on earth, dawned in the purest splendour. To make reflections more sad, Joan now heard for the first time, that she was at Rouen, the seat of her former triumphs; and, by a very strange coincidence, it was one day later of the same month in which, exactly two years since, she had obliged the English to raise the siege of Orleans. All these circumstances did not discourage Joan, they rather fixed upon her mind the belief that she was, as she had always declared, a "humble tool in the hands of One who disposed of her fate."

"Oh!" exclaimed Joan, in similar words to those used by Cardinal Wolsey on his death-bed, "had I but served my God with half the zeal I have served my king, this might not have been my fate."

And now Joan's mind, which was naturally religious, took this new turn, and she assured the confessor who attended her that she believed she ought to have used her talents for her heavenly Father, instead of employing them for her earthly king; but even in her last bitter moments, she never reproached Charles, but prayed for his prosperity and safety. When the fatal hour arrived, poor Joan was perfectly calm, and took great pains in dressing herself, although she wore a coarse black serge dress, the common attire of condemned persons: her personal beauty (now increased in character from the lofty turn of her mind, directed wholly heavenward) shone conspicuous in this plain attire.

When Joan stood at the stake she watched the fearful preparations with only a very slight quiver of her beautiful lips; her eye wandered amongst the dense multitude assembled to witness her sufferings. Oh! there is something degrading to humanity in the assemblage of human beings, who commonly flock, together to witness an execution to feast their eyes on the sufferings of a fellow-creature.

I very well remember when in France, some

years ago, there was a man condemned to be guillotined, a dense concourse of persons flocked together, men and women, some of the latter carrying babes in their arms; young girls, too, stifling the feeling of humanity, hurried to the fatal spot. Alas! it is not more in France than in our own land that this is practised. I am told it is exactly the same in my own native country, though I trust that few calling themselves real Christians could look at the appalling sight.

Seeing that all was now ready, Joan lifted up her hands to heaven, and exclaimed, "Oh, heavenly Father! thou who hearest the prayers of thy humble servants, listen to those I offer up for my beloved country, and for my king. Oh! may he long live over his people, and be delivered from the machinations of his enemies. If it be wrong of him to let me perish without an effort to save me, I acquit him of all blame: may his other offences be likewise forgiven! Another hour and the sun will shine on my body, then a heap of cinders! Farewell! then, to the glorious beauties of nature! The birds will sing, and the flowerets will bloom, but not for me again. Oh! that

my death were a harbinger of peace! Yes, something within me says that my country will yet be free. I curse not my enemies, I wish not evil personally to the regent; but may the English, as a nation, reap the fruits of their cruelty! may they be driven from this land, and find in their own the type of that dissension they have sown in my beloved France! Oh! France, dear land of my birth, a last, a fond adieu! And you all here assembled, witness ye that 'Joan of Arc' knows how to meet her death! Perhaps some will regret her when she is no more! perhaps some will say it was not well to cut her off in the flower of her youth, in the bloom of her years! Of what avail will then be the tardy pity I shall receive? Oh! man is but a thing of nought! This world is but an empty dwelling-place; now is awaiting for me a 'crown of glory which fadeth not away.' Now are the gates of everlasting life opened to receive me; and one is ready to usher me in with the welcome words, 'enter in and receive the reward prepared for all those who have loved Jesus.'"

The young girl ceased, a thrill of admira-

tion and compassion ran through the crowd. A faint effort was made to rescue her ; but the soldiery kept the populace back, and in a short time Joan's sufferings were over, and her soul was wafted far away from the perishable world which had thus rewarded all her exertions with an excruciating death. Thus perished the unfortunate Maid of Orleans ; and now turn we to the historical events which followed her death ; leave we the thread of the romance, which may serve to impress on young persons events connected with Joan's life.

As poor Joan had prophesied, the English were driven out of France, and experienced the miseries of war lately felt on the continent, in the deadly strifes of the White and Red Roses, in which a brother raised his hand against his brother, and a father against his son. The Duke of Burgundy (and following the thread of this little tale, we will suppose at the instigation of the Burgundian general,) made a separate peace with Charles, and deserted the English. This so preyed upon the regent's mind that it occasioned his death. The Dukes of York and Somerset,

who succeeded him as regents of France, wanted the late duke's courage and abilities; and when the civil wars broke out in England, were too much occupied to be able to retain their power in France. Paris was the first to throw off the English yoke, and, November the 4th, 1437, Charles entered his capital after a banishment of seventeen years. But Charles did not enjoy much comfort, his domestic happiness was marred by the unworthy conduct of his son, afterwards Louis XI., who, from his earliest youth, had shown his turbulent disposition. He also lost his favourite, Agnes Sorel. Some suspected her to have been poisoned by the Dauphin; and the unhappy king, fearful of meeting the same fate, refused all nourishment, until it was too late to save his life. Before his death the king, who had provided for poor Joan's family, did tardy justice to her memory by assembling the prelates and nobles at Rouen, and burning the process of her condemnation. But, alas! this happened twenty-four years after the poor maid's death; and although the king spoke of her in the highest terms, although statues were erected to her memory,

there were no remains to be wept over ; the brave girl's dust had mouldered in the cinders, flames had destroyed her brave frame, and she did not live to see her ardently-desired object accomplished.

In 1448, the war between France and England was renewed, but the English were defeated. Talbot, the last remaining brave general who endeavoured to retrieve Henry's fortune, was slain with his son, near Chatelon, in 1453. In a little time the town of Calais was all that remained of the English possessions on the continent. Mezerai says, that the judgment of God fell on all Joan's judges, and that they died violent deaths. I do not know, says Mrs. Markham, in her excellent history of France, how far that is true, but it is certain that the Bishop of Lisieux was so conscious of his crime, that he founded a chapel at Lisieux in expiation of it.

And now we will draw a curtain over the persons brought forward in this little tale ; fiction would be ill placed, after bringing forward the facts of history. Yet I hope none will find fault with me for indulging in it, and that my young friends in reading this lit-

the book will remember the historical events connected with France and England which it brings to mind.

In conclusion, I have only to express a hope, that my object in writing this small volume may be realised. I trust that many of my young friends will learn from its pages the changing fate of all mortals here below ; and remember, that Joan of Arc perishing in the flames in her youth and beauty, is only one of the many who have been sacrificed to the vindictive feelings of ambitious men. Check then this disposition from earliest infancy. Remember that Bedford, Lisieux, and many other cruel men, were like yourselves, once guileless and tractable in the hands of tutors and parents. Little faults when summed up make the sum total of more heinous crimes ! Indulge, then, betimes an amiable and kind disposition ; be charitable to all men, severe towards yourself, indulgent to others. Take the golden rule for your maxim, " Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

Believe, like Joan, that you are all " tools in the hand of a great Master ;" and when

afflictions come upon you, bless the hand which with each sorrow brings a comforting ray to cheer your way through the dark vale of tears. Above all, cultivate an earnest desire after religion ; and then in all our trials, all our afflictions, under the loss of those dear ones tied to us by the tender bonds of relations ; under each and every affliction, we shall say, “ Thy will, oh Lord, be done ! ”

FINIS.

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